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Minnesota State University, Mankato

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Racial Microaggressions and Alienation Among Hmong American College Students

By

Bruce Yang

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Counselor Education and Supervision

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

October 2019

Racial Microaggressions and Alienation Among Hmong American College Students

Bruce Yang

This dissertation has been examined and approved by the following members of the dissertation committee.

_____

Jacqueline Lewis, PhD
Advisor

_____

Diane Coursol, PhD
Committee Member

_____

John Seymour, PhD
Committee Member

_____

Kerry Diekmann, EdD
Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

Students of color continue to experience racism within institutions of higher education across the United States. These experiences often include racial microaggressions, which are evolved forms of racism that are subtle, difficult to detect, and harmful. Racial microaggressions have been found to be associated with several consequences including mental health, emotional, and physical problems (Dahlia & Lieberman, 2010; Connolly, 2011; Cheng, Tran, Miyake, & Kim, 2017). Furthermore, studies have also alluded to the potential relationship between racial microaggressions and the dimensions of alienation for student populations of color (Fissori, 2010; James, 1988; Lambert, Herman, Bynum, & Ialongo, 2009; Sauceda, 2010; Yosso, Smith, & Ceja, 2009). This study explored the relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) and alienation as measured by the University Alienation Scale (UAS; Burbach, 1972) among Hmong American students (N = 97) in higher education. This study also examined whether these experiences are different based on gender. The results revealed that five of the six types of racial microaggressions, namely *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*, *Micro-Invalidations*, *Assumptions of Inferiority*, *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*, and *Workplace and School Microaggressions* were significantly related to two of the three dimensions of alienation, namely *Powerlessness* and *Meaninglessness*. Meanwhile, the findings indicated that there was no significant difference in these experiences based on gender. These findings suggest a need for more support for Hmong American students across the higher education setting, mandatory involvement in diversity and inclusion work for all campus community members, and the development of a response to racial microaggressions.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background

Even after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 racism remains a pervasive problem in the United States. This Act requires that "all persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation… without discrimination or segregation on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin" (42 U.S.C. § 2000a). As Joe R. Feagan (1992) stated, "The sites of racial discrimination range from relatively protected home sites, to the even less protected workplace and educational sites, to the even less protected public places." Furthermore, Clinton's Race Advisory Board concluded in 1998 that racism continues to be a problem as "(a) …one of the most divisive forces in our society; (b) racial legacies of the past continue to haunt current policies and practices that create unfair disparities between minority and majority groups; (c) racial inequalities are so deeply ingrained in American society that they are nearly invisible; and (d) most White Americans are unaware of the advantages they enjoy in this society and how their attitudes and actions unintentionally discriminate against persons of color," as noted by Sue et al., (2007).

Unfortunately, not even colleges are immune to racism and often, students experience racism in many ways ranging from the interpersonal interactions with peers and professors to the institutional systemic policies that perpetuate racial stereotypes and discriminatory practices such as in the case of the admissions process at Harvard University and other Ivy League institutions that make it more difficult for Asian Americans to gain acceptance (Schmidt, 2015). The current body of research on racism within higher education reveals that racial and ethnic minority

students are frequently confronted by racism, ranging from different types and severity. In fact, experiences often differ based on the racial makeup of the student. For example, the data indicates that African Americans encounter racial stereotypes that question their intellectual capabilities and their merits of being in college (Kibria, 2002). In contrast, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (APIs) are perceived as model minorities, forever foreigners, gender role traditionalists, and even well-to-do or persons from a wealthy background (Tuan, 1999; Kibria, 2002), despite the financial challenges that many of them experience. Stereotypes like these are often perpetuated because of the lack of awareness and ineffective approaches to educating others about these issues. Current practices even maintain student activities along racial lines, which can limit the opportunity to have real dialogue on these issues (Kibria, 2002).

Despite their support for multiculturalism and the embracement of diversity, professionals in higher education often lack awareness of the broader racial issues that confront students. Scisney-Matlock and Matlock (2001) describe higher education as a microcosm of society where there are shared similarities in terms of trends and patterns of race relations in larger society. Without awareness of these trends and patterns, racial issues within the microcosm of higher education can remain unaddressed and can continue to be present in the lives of students of color. An example is how stereotypical portrayals of APIs are carried from greater society to the higher education setting, where they are then treated as foreigners, or viewed as the model student.

This is an issue that is not only reflected on the experience of API students, but also in the experience of API faculty, staff, and other professionals as well. Racial and ethnic minority students, supervisees, staffs, and faculty can experience racial dilemmas because of their position of marginalization. For example, African American students may be assumed to be less

intelligent by students and faculty, where they may have difficulty finding support. In contrast, Asian American students may be viewed as foreigners and be intentionally isolated by their peers (Kibria, 2002). These stressors provide students of color with an additional barrier to overcome, making the landscape of higher education less welcoming and conducive to learning. As for faculty of color, there are several challenges that go with their roles as alluded to by Padilla (1994), referring to them as cultural taxation. These challenges include addressing diversity-related issues for the department and institution, serving on diversity committees, advising students of color, and lecturing on diversity topics. Furthermore, faculty of color may also be implicitly asked to speak for their race and/or other racial and ethnic minorities in faculty meetings (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2011). With the added work, faculty of color are expected to have the same teaching and research obligations as the White faculty in their department (Shavers et al., 2014).

Racial Microaggressions

Since the Civil Rights movement of the 1950's and 60's, the nature of racism has evolved. The research suggests that the face of racism has shifted from the blatant types that were investigated by Feagan (1991), to more subtle forms of racism that some have labeled as modern racism (McConahay, 1986), symbolic racism (Sears, 1988), and aversive racism (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002). Sue (2007) described these forms of racism as similar because they indicate that racism is likely to be "(a) disguised and covert," and "(b) has become more ambiguous and nebulous that is more difficult to identify." This newer form of racism is referred to as racial micro-aggressions. Franklin (1999) described racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that somehow communicate negative or denigrating messages to people of color."

Sue et al. (2007) described racial microaggressions as having three different forms that include micro-invalidation, micro-assault, and micro-insult. Micro-assaults are racial derogates that are more explicit in nature, closely resembling blatant forms of racism that are meant to hurt the student of color. They can be conveyed through verbal or non-verbal interactions. Some examples include "using racial epithets, discouraging interracial interactions, deliberately serving a White Patron before someone of color, and displaying a swastika (Sue et al., 2007)." Micro-insults are subtler and less noticeable than the assaults because the messages are hidden through verbal and non-verbal communication. An example is when a White teacher asks an African American student how he was able to solve a complicated math problem. The hidden message and assumptions are that (a) African Americans are not good in math and (b), this student cheated to solve the problem. Lastly, micro-invalidations involve "excluding, negating, or nullify(ing) psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color (Sue et al., 2007)." Sue et al. (2007), describes an example where APIs are asked where they are from and how they can speak English so well. This negates APIs as Americans and to continue the perpetuation of the stereotype that APIs are foreigners.

Although older forms of racism are less visible nowadays, the racial climate of college campuses continues to be impacted by racism through these racial micro-aggressions (Applebaum, 2019; Casanova, McGuire, & Martin, 2018; Harris, 2017; Hotchkins, 2016; Mena & Vaccaro, 2017; Yeo, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Huntt, 2019). This is problematic because studies have shown, that the campus climate has a significant impact on the social experiences, academic performance and outcomes, and mental health of students of color (Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998; Cress & Ikeda, 2003; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, Milem, Milem & Hakuta, 2000; Liang, Li, & Kim, 2004; Choi, 2011).

The existing research reveals that students of color generally share similar experiences with racial micro-aggressions, though there appears to be differences in the perception of how the events align. Some studies have indicated that African American students view race as the reason for the differential treatment more frequently than other students and their performance suffers more than other racial groups when they feel they are being treated differently (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, 1998). Not surprisingly, they tend to be less satisfied with the racial climate on their campuses (Ancis, Sedlacek & Mohr, 2000; Hurtado, 1992; Solórzano, 2000; Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). Similarly, Latino/a American students also share feelings of dissatisfaction with their college experiences due to racial micro-aggressions that they experience at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Latino/a students often feel out-of-place by awkward stares and feelings of isolation, leading them to consider dropping out of school despite performing well (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). For API students, there is a pattern of feeling disconnected because they are often viewed as the model minority, forever foreigners, gender role traditionalists, and from well-to-do families (Takaki, 1994; Hune & Chan, 1997; Kibria, 2002).

It is apparent that racial microaggressions are experienced by college students from all the racial/ethnic groups though the experience of each group is unique, and that they are all impacted by the experience (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Peterson, and Allen, 1998; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Kibria, 2002). Therefore, it is important to understand the experience of each group so that an effective approach for addressing their concerns regarding race and providing appropriate services to students of color in higher education can be implemented.

As Choi (2011) indicated, a major problem with the current discourse on race is the public perception that race is a black-white binary. This is a concern that was also echoed by

Espiritu (1997) and Young and Takeuchi (1998). They stated that the inattention to racial problems and particularly to the experience to APIs is based on a tendency by Americans to dichotomize racial issues as between White people and African Americans persons. This creates the assumption that the racial experiences of APIs can be explained by research based on the experience between these two groups. In addition, Choi also identified the lack of literature on APIs college students and their racial experiences and made a similar point that the idea of race is perceived interchangeably with African Americans. Hence, when racial experiences are incongruent with the experiences of African Americans, it is often invalidated as a topic worthy of discussion and social policy (Perea, 2000).

The dichotomization of racial problems is a problem for APIs and other racial and ethnic minority groups that remain under the radar. In 2001, the Surgeon General stated that "racial and ethnic minorities in the United States face a social and economic environment of inequality that includes greater exposure to racism and discrimination, violence, and poverty, all of which take a toll on mental health" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). This statement is consistent with findings from multiple studies that focused on the experiences of API American students within higher education regarding racism and discrimination (Sue et al., 2007; Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, & Sue, 2013; Nadal, Wong, Griffin, & Sriken, 2014).

Like other racial and ethnic minority groups, APIs experience a range of challenges with micro-aggressions in higher education that lead to problems with their social, psychological and physical well-being. Wang, Leu, and Shoda (2011) indicated that the racial experience for many API students is a sensitive topic. Their findings suggested that students from this group experience a greater sense of emotional intensity when interpreting potential cases of racial micro-aggressions such as when others decide to not to sit by you even when it is the only seat

available on a bus, or when co-workers stop their joking and laughing when they interact with them and do not include them in the experience (Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011). When these experiences are brought up, it results in feelings that range from anger, resentment, frustration, and contempt (Wang et al., 2011).

In addition to the emotional impact, there are also mental health consequences associated with racial microaggressions. Wang, Siy, and Cheryan (2011) made a connection between the findings in Lee's (2003) study on discrimination of APIs to a study conducted by Chan and Mendoza-Denton (2008), that suggested that due to discrimination API students anticipated rejection based on their racial identity. This rejection can lead to feelings of shame and negatively impacting the self-esteem of API college students. API youths were also found to generally experience psychological distress, depression, anxiety disorders, and poor psychological adjustment (Wang et al., 2011). Interestingly, Yip, Gee, and Takeuchi (2008) found that psychological distress correlated with ethnic identity for API and Latino populations, where having a strong sense of ethnic identity was associated with having less distress. If this finding is consistent across subgroups, it suggests that APIs college students are likely to experience mental health distress. This sense of invalidation that API students and youth experience mirror their experience related to their race in the larger society in the United States. In mainstream American culture including on social media, as well as in public discussions on race there is little focus on the experiences and racial identities of APIs due to the larger focus on the black-white binary (Lee & Zhou, 2004; Choi, 2011). With little emphasis on this group, APIs experience racialization through stereotypes such as the notion of cultural homogeneity, perpetual foreigner, and model minority, all of which can take the form of racial

microaggressions (Choi, 2011). This invalidates the identities of APIs by undermining their lived experiences and disempowers them from defining their experience.

Hmong Americans

One group of APIs that have had little attention in the research on racial micro-aggressions are the Hmong. The origins of the Hmong are uncertain, and some historians have even made such claims that they are decedents of the ancient group of people from Turkistan (Quincy, 1988). What is known about this group is that they have lived in China for several hundred years and eventually migrated to the neighboring countries in Southeast Asia to countries like Laos and Vietnam. The journey of the Hmong to the United States began in 1961 when the Americans became involved in the Vietnam conflict by siding with the South Vietnamese government to prevent the spread of communism into Southeast Asia. As the war intensified and spread to neighboring countries like Laos and Cambodia, the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) recruited and trained thousands of Hmong men along with other mountainous people to rescue downed American pilots (Hamilton-Merritt, 1992). In 1973 the United States reached an agreement with the North Vietnamese government and agreed to withdrawal their forces over a period of two years. Many of the Hmong soldiers that fought alongside the Americans were initially left behind and ended up in either refugee camps or surviving on their own in the jungles of Laos.

In the years that ensued, the United States eventually agreed to allow more Hmong to migrate to America and based on a 2010 report by the Hmong National Development organization, their population is currently estimated to be around 260,000. The growth rate of the Hmong population between 1990 and 2010 is about 175%. In 2010, the three states with the largest Hmong populations included California (91,224), Minnesota (66,181), and Wisconsin

(49,240). In these states, the Hmong are concentrated in a few cities such as Sacramento and Fresno in California, Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota, and Green Bay and La Crosse in Wisconsin.

While the Hmong population is significant in some states the research on educational trends for Hmong college students raises some major concerns when compared to the national averages of other groups. Hmong American students face many challenges that can be easily overlooked through stereotypes and generalizations made about the overall API population. The model minority myth assumes that APIs are doing well and need little support to succeed but as indicated by the census report, this is not true for groups like the Hmong. With the dichotomous view of race relations in the United States where APIs are left out from the conversation on race, in addition to the lack of support from the assumptions under the model minority myth, college can be a very challenging experience for this group as indicated by Choi (2011). In fact, when comparing the Hmong to the average of APIs all together, Hmong Americans fall behind with their average rate of 50% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of Hmong American students in higher education. More specifically, it will examine the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong college students and examine whether gender differences exist. Racial micro-aggressions will be measured by the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) and university alienation will be measured by the University Alienation Scale (UAS; Burbach et al. 1972).

Rationale for Study

In order to provide API students with a positive experience in higher education and to ensure that they succeed, it is necessary to investigate the extent to which they experience racial micro-aggressions and to what degree these experiences result in feelings of alienation. Several studies reveal that racial microaggressions are associated with mental health issues for ethnic and racial minorities. APIs often have experiences with depression, stress and anxiety from these encounters and cope with them differently based on their connection to cultural values, "loyalty to family, sensitivity to shame, and preference for indigenous healers (Liang, Li, & Kim, 2004). Research has also shown the relationship between mental health problems and poor academic performance for APIs (Watkins, 2012), as well as their underutilization of counseling services to address issues related to mental health (Liang et al., 2004). Therefore, colleges and universities need to understand the racial experiences of APIs including that of Hmong American students. There is a need to investigate how this population experiences microaggressions and how they are impacted by racial microaggressions.

In addition, it is important to understand the similarities and differences of these experiences based on gender. API men and women can have entirely different experiences and needs in terms of support to deal with the experience of microaggressions. Differences can be attributed to several factors including exposure to different stereotypes, assumptions, and encounters. For instance, Espiritu (1997) indicated that API women are seen as more assimilable and culturally malleable than API men because they can marry into the majority culture, or to individuals from the most dominant group (White men) in the country. In contrast, the identities of API men are often perceived as controlling and undesirable in addition to other stereotypes that APIs are commonly associated with such as the assumptions that they are "deceitful, underhanded, and dishonest" (Suzuki, 1994). Based on how API men and women are perceived

differently by individuals of the majority culture, their experiences and perceptions of these experiences may vary. API men and women may view their racial experiences very differently, in terms of the degree to which they relate it to race. Therefore, due to the uncertainty of how API and particularly Hmong men and women may differ in their experiences with racial micro-aggressions, as well as how this may impact their sense of alienation, further investigation into their differences is required.

Research questions. This study will investigate the relationship between racial microaggressions and university alienation among Hmong American college students; and the difference in this association based on gender. Research questions one (RQ1) and two (RQ2) are stated below:

RQ1: What is the relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education.

RQ2: Is there a difference between Hmong college student males' and females' reported experiences of the composite of alienation, as measured by the UAS, and racial microaggressions, as measured by the composite REMS.

Hypothesis. Thus, the null and alternative hypotheses for research question one RQ1 is stated below:

H0: There is no significant relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education.

H1: There is a significant relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education.

For RQ2, the null and alternative hypothesis are stated below:

H0: There is no significant difference between Hmong college student males' and females' reported experiences of the composite of alienation, as measured by the UAS, and racial microaggressions, as measured by the composite REMS.

H1: There is a significant difference between Hmong college student males' and females' reported experiences of the composite of alienation, as measured by the UAS, and racial microaggressions, as measured by the composite REMS.

Limitations

To date there is no research on the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong college students, yet, this study has certain limitations. One limitation is its limited generalizability. The sample for this study includes Hmong American college students at a Research I institution in the Midwest located in a state that is home to the nation's second largest Hmong population. This may also influence how Hmong students perceive their experiences with racial micro-aggressions. For example, it is possible that Hmong American students in colleges that have few students from their population may experience racial micro-aggressions differently in terms of how they respond to and cope with these encounters.

Therefore, the findings in this study cannot be generalized to all API college students in higher education, especially if there are significant differences in experiences and historical contexts of each group.

Furthermore, the Hmong have a unique history and marginalized position that may differentiate them from other API groups. As stated by Quincy (1988), the Hmong have had a minority status in the countries they resided in and have been historically oppressed. This may have influenced the way they approach oppression and discrimination. Also, unlike larger API groups the Hmong are not included in the model minority stereotype due to the challenges they have with financial and educational success (Zhou & Xiong, 2005).

Lastly, a third factor that can undermine external validity is the time the data collection takes place. Depending on the time of the school year and political context of the country, it is possible that students may respond differently to the questions on the surveys. With the current racial tensions being high in the United States, due to the shootings of African American men, the increasing visibility and presence of the Alt-Right groups, and the lack of condemnation of these racist notions and acts by members of these bigoted groups, students may be more vigilant of racist experiences than usual.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used.

Alienation. This term refers to the condition under the feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social estrangement as operationalized by Burbach (1972), where (a) powerlessness is reflected by an individual or worker, to the extent where the decisions of labor are made by a ruling class, or not by one's own choice; (b) meaninglessness is reflected by the disconnect between things that happen and one's own intellectual insight; and (c) social estrangement is reflected by an individuals' disconnection from him/her self and/or becoming estranged from him/her self (Seeman, 1959).

Asian American. The term 'Asian' American refers people of Asian descent. It emerged in the 1960's as a movement to counteract the derogatory term 'oriental' and to empower individuals in this racial category through self-consciousness and positive identity assertion. The creation of the concept was also an effort to unite groups under this category through a shared struggle and discriminatory experiences (Espiritu, 1992).

Racial Micro-Aggressions. Refers to "brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that somehow communicate negative or denigrating messages to people of color (Sue et al., 2007)." These aggressions can occur in any form ranging from a single non-verbal gesture to a combination of verbal, behavioral, and cumulative incidences (Sue, 2007).

Model Minority. The term model minority refers to Asian Americans being the racial group that other groups should aspire towards. This stereotype was coined by Peterson (1966) in a *New York Times Magazine* article to praise Japanese Americans for their achievements and as an example that other racial and ethnic minority groups should follow.

Forever Foreigner. The term refers to the notion that Asian Americans are unassimilable and will always be perceived as foreigners. This stereotype emerged during the formation of the Japanese concentration camps during World War II and was eventually a perception that was attributed to all APIs as non-American and was further reinforced in the 1980's when the United States felt threatened by the growing power of API countries (Suzuki, 2002). Even American-born APIs were considered non-legitimate (Omi, 2008). This label has origins related to laws, legal rulings, and events in the last century such as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the 1917 Asiatic Barred Zone Act, 1922 Takao Ozawa v. United States, and the Japanese internment camps during World War II.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will provide a review of the literature on the history of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (APIs) in the United States, discuss the racialization of APIs, and the impact of racial microaggressions on people of color.

History of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (API) have a long history of immigration to the United States, but it was not until the mid to late 1960's with the implementation of the Immigration Act in 1965 that allowed a consistent flow of APIs into this country. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 essentially removed the quota system that had restricted the number of individuals from Asian countries to enter the United States, which resulted in their growth across the country (Kibria, 2002). Between 1965 and 2000, there was a seven-fold increase in the API population and according to some of the latest data collected by the United States Census Bureau in 2013, the API population in this country is estimated to be at 19.4 million or about 6% of the population of about 315.1 million that year. Yip (1996) estimated that the API population would rise to about 8% by 2050. The three states with the largest API populations from highest to lowest is New York with 1.7 million, Texas with 1.3 million, and California with 1 million. The three largest API groups are currently Chinese, Filipinos, and Asian Indians.

In addition to the population growth experienced by this population, there were also indications of financial development as well. For APIs as a group, the median household income was $72,472 based on the 2013 census. The 2013 census also indicated that ethnic groups under

the API category differed greatly and gave the example of Asian Indians having a median income of about $100, 547 in contrast to Bangladeshi's with $51,331. In contrast to all other Americans with a median income of $52,250, APIs appear to be making considerably more as a racial group, which may be an outcome possibly associated with education attainment, poverty rate, and unemployment.

Regarding education, there is only a slight difference between APIs and the rest of the population with APIs at 86% and all other groups at 87% for high school diploma attainment. However, there is a significant difference in attainment of bachelor's degrees. The census indicates that about 30% of Americans who are 25 and older have a bachelor's degree whereas APIs have nearly doubled this amount with 51% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). As with income, this latter difference may also be associated with poverty rate and unemployment.

According to the 2013 United States census, the poverty rate for APIs was at 13% with an unemployment rate of 4%. In contrast, the national average poverty rate stood 15% with 8% for unemployment rate. Although the unemployment rate did experience a decline by December of 2013 to 7%, APIs still had a considerably lower rate. When perceiving APIs as a homogenous group, the contrast in median household income, education attainment, poverty rate, and unemployment rate can easily be greatly misinterpreted. There are many ethnicities that fall under the API category that have different experiences when considering these statistics. The next section will bring more clarity to these differences.

Two Waves of Asian Migration to the United States

APIs made their way to the United States in two major waves that occurred throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. There are some important distinctions between the two waves in terms of group origins and purpose. The first wave of APIs immigration occurred in the middle

of the 19th century and was known as the "Old Asian Immigration" according to Kibria (2002), which was made up of people from China, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea who were mostly unskilled laborers in search of opportunities in the United States. The beginning of this phase largely consisted of Japanese and Chinese people, which gradually included Koreans, Filipinos, and Asian Indians at the later stages (Kibria, 2002). Presently, the first wave of APIs has been in the United States for over a century and the majority are third or fourth generation American citizens. It is also important to note that groups like the Chinese in this wave could and in many cases, have returned to their homeland after achieving their financial goals in the United States (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

The second wave of APIs arrived post 1965, after the Civil Rights Movements following the removal of the quota system that restricted various API groups from entering the country. Unlike the first wave, this one consisted largely of Southeast Asians from war torn countries where the United States were involved militarily. Most notable was United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, which led to the influx of API groups like the Hmong, Vietnamese, and Lao among many other ethnic minority groups to the country (Karnow, 1997). Unlike the first wave of APIs, many people from these groups were refugees who were unable to return to their homelands because they supported the United States' forces during the conflicts (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Other differences about this wave include educational attainment, median household income, and poverty rates. According to the American Community Survey (SEARAC), 2010 statistics on Southeast Asians, the national average for APIs overall with a bachelor's degree or higher in this country is 48%. In contrast to this statistic, Southeast Asians held lower percentages. The attainment of bachelor's degrees or higher were at 16% for Cambodian

Americans, 15% for Hmong Americans, 13% for Laotian Americans, and 26% for Vietnamese Americans. However, under the broader umbrella term of "Asian Americans," the statistics for Southeast Asians can be lost due to the population sizes of these groups. Since the largest API groups consist mostly of East Asians, the statistics for Southeast Asian American's education attainment have little influence on the overall average of 49%. With the breakdown of these numbers, it is apparent that there is a large contrast in education attainment between Southeast Asians and all other API groups as the percentage of the other groups doubled and, in some cases, tripled the rate of attainment in these categories.

The median household income rates are a little less disparate in comparison to the educational attainment differences. The reported national average median household income for APIs overall is at $66,201, which is about 67% higher than the United States' national average at $50,046 (SEARAC, 2010). In comparison to the Southeast Asian ethnic groups included in the report, Cambodians were reported to be at 48,691, the Hmong at 45,776, the Laotian at 52,212, and the Vietnamese at 52,511. As shown in this report, Southeast Asians at the time made considerably less than the API overall median household income, which was 1.35 times higher than the income for Cambodians, 1.4 times higher than the Hmong, 1.3 times higher than the Laotians and Vietnamese.

As for poverty rates for families, the 2010 SEARAC reported large differences between some Southeast Asian groups and the API overall statistic. The rate of poverty for API overall families at the time of the report was at a 9%, which was two percent lower than the United States' national rate of 11%. When compared to the Southeast Asian ethnic groups that were included in the survey, there were vast differences. The Hmong had the highest of poverty for families with a rate of 27%, being that of 2.9 times higher than the API overall rate. Laotians

families held the lowest rate of family poverty with 12%, closely resembling the national average but still distant from the API overall by almost 3%. Clearly, even among the Southeast Asian ethnic groups there are some differences in terms of poverty with Hmong experiencing a rate that is considerably higher than all the other groups. In general, when compared to many of the people in the API groups, the Hmong do not do well in the areas of income, poverty and education.

Teranishi (2004) states that the Hmong is an interesting group because of their unique position of nearly always maintaining a minority status throughout history. According to Fadiman (1997), the Hun Chinese government viewed the Hmong as uncivilized barbarians and forced them out of China into the bordering countries in Southeast Asia where they were able to avoid assimilation and survive as farmers. Though their history is still marked in mystery, it appears as though by living in locations that were less preferred by others had enabled the Hmong to survive against oppressive forces and assimilation. It is not certain as to what occurred, however, it could be that the Hmong today are to some level still using the same survival strategies that had allowed them to survive over the past centuries; methods that may no longer be effective in an age of technological advances. Resembling the move to the hillsides of Laos, the forming of ethnic enclaves is in a way to remove one's self from the cultural norm in society back to what is familiar and safe. What may be more challenging for the Hmong community is identifying the dangers and threats because explicit forms of attacks are not as common as they may have been in those days. Dangers and threats, along with assimilation may be inevitable as newer generations are born in the United States, experiencing the gradual loss of ethnic culture and traditional practices as can observed by the transition to the common usage of broken Hmong and/or full English by Hmong youth. In addition to language, the process of

racialization for the Hmong community could potentially can make culture and tradition preservation more challenging.

Racialization of Asian Americans

When the initial wave of API immigrants arrived in the United States, their process of integration into American society shared some similarities and differences with their European counterparts. The similarity was the pattern of gradual merging between their population and groups that were already residing in the areas based on affiliations and similarities such as nationality and the practice of religion. The result of this merging is still observable across the United States, as there are many areas with dense populations of specific racial and ethnic groups, forming enclaves such as ""Chinatown," "Koreatown," "Little Saigon," and "Little Phnom Penh (Teranishi, 2004)."" However, unlike the European immigration experience, API immigrants went through a process of ethnogenesis, which is a shift of one collective identity to another and being established into a racial minority group (Kibria, 2002). An example of this is when someone is forced to identify him or herself racially and/or ethnically, rather than by location of origin. This process for APIs has mostly revolved around racial lines and has yet to shift to specific ethnic identities. As described by Kibria (2002), when API immigrants come to the United States a racial identity is imposed on them by means of labeling, exclusion, and the gradual disconnection from their immigrant past. However, while European immigrants can eventually assimilate to the mainstream culture due to their White physical features, other racial minorities like APIs cannot and have a new racial identity imposed on them that may not have much salience to their original identity (Ports & Zhou, 1993).

If higher education institutions are microcosms of society then API college students must experience racism, and to some level, this process of ethnogenesis on a college campus as well

(Choi, 2011). Using a qualitative approach Choi examined the various aspects of racialization for API students using in-depth interviews. This study found that race-related experiences in higher education were a significant factor in the formation of racial identity. Choi's (2011) study also indicated that these experiences affect student's perceptions of the racial climate, which then impacted the way that API students were interacting with the college environment such as being engaged and connecting to resources.

In addition to the disconnection that the process of racialization had created for these students, it had also created a misperception of whom they are based on broader stereotypes used for APIs. These students were perceived as the model minority and were affected as they felt annoyed, irritated, and fearful of the further perpetuation of this notion. This is an indication that students experiencing racialization are affected by several ways, ranging from the assumptions of racial homogeneity to assumptions of specific qualities and/or traits.

Although this study yielded important information about the racialized experiences of API students on college campuses, it may not reflect the characteristics of other colleges and universities across the United States as it was conducted at a large private university where API students were 20% of the student body. It was also noted that the landscape or the campus had a unique complexity to it, appealing to students who are independent and willing to take the challenge of being there. This is indicative of a school with a student body that is based on narrow selection criteria, which could be associated with certain levels of resiliency among the API population in that school. The unique factors that are associated with this sample may impact the way that this specific population identify and perceive their racial experiences.

Meanwhile, some studies indicated that the Model Minority label continues to be a significant part of the lives of API students (Wong & Halgin, 2006; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, &

Lin, 1998). In addition to African Americans, Native Americans, and White students viewing Asian Americans as the model minority, even some Asian American students view themselves as the model minority (Wong et al., 1998). There is an assumption that this group performs better academically, is more motivated, and will have more career success than any other racial group. This notion was more specifically associated with Chinese Americans based on the belief that they place a greater emphasis on education. However, Kang (2001) found that nearly 70% of its respondents held either "somewhat negative" views or "very negative" views about Chinese Americans due to beliefs that they had too much influence in the United States. It was assumed that they were taking away jobs from other Americans and were more loyal to China. Both stereotypes, the model minority and the notion that Chinese Americans are more loyal to China are indicative of another stereotype; the forever foreigner. This assumes that Chinese Americans and APIs in general are not true Americans and are viewed as outsiders (Kibria, 2002). The overlap between these stereotypes can create a complex and hostile environment for APIs and reflects the process of racialization for this group.

Meanwhile, a study by Oyserman and Sakamoto (1997) found that most API students did not like the model minority myth. A sample of 162 API undergraduates was surveyed to see if they liked being identified with the model minority label. Through the survey, they learned that more than half (52%) of the participants held negative views about the label and 16% of the participants held ambivalent feelings. Interestingly, those who held more negative views about the label tended to give equal weight to their self-identity and group identity where they did not like being tied to a group image. Participants who expressed positive feelings towards the label were more connected to their ethnic and overall group identity. This study offers an understanding of how APIs feel about the label as well as a sense of their connection to group

identity. It appears that the negative or positive perception of this label is dependent upon their degree of connection to their group (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997).

While the model minority label is used to subtly suggest that other racial and ethnic minority groups should aspire towards becoming more like Asian Americans, studies by Kang (2001) and Toupin and Son (1991) revealed that the model minority label has created negative perceptions of APIs. Toupin and Son (1991) focused on how the model minority label affected API college students and revealed that non-APIs felt threatened by APIs and that they were viewed as a threat to their "grades, jobs, and future status." Furthermore, the different messages this label can create may also complicate the racial development of Asian Americans

Toupin and Son (1991) revealed how the process of racialization of APIs can negatively impact the experiences of API students by further complicating their process of identity development and by adding stressors to achieve in areas where they may lack talent. The study provided information that is valuable to our understanding of the negative impact of the model minority myth, a label that assumes that all APIs do well educationally and financially. However, it is uncertain as to how the model minority label impacts API populations that do not do as well in terms of education and financial attainment. Like this label, racial microaggressions for APIs and other racial groups appear in many ways and have a variety of consequences.

Racial Microaggressions

Racialization is a common experience for APIs in the United States, even if they may not be aware of it. This process exists on a continuum ranging from the explicit and blatant types of racism to the more covert and subtle ones. Currently, much of the racism today is more covert in nature. The covert and subtle type of racisms are more difficult to detect due to the ambiguity of

their nature. They are known as racial microaggressions. The example of the model minority myth falls under this type due to the nature of the offenses, which are usually subtle and difficult to identify.

The term racial microaggressions was first coined by Pierce and his colleagues (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzales, & Willis, 1978) who defined microaggressions as "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs.'" After the introduction of this term, several other terms were coined to describe experiences that resembled racial microaggressions. These terms included *Modern Racism* by McConahay (1986), *Symbolic Racism* by Sears (1988), and *Aversive Racism* by Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, and Hodson (2002).

Modern racism refers to a racial attitude towards African Americans and is based on the notion that racism is not a problem in the present and that African Americans should make more of an effort to overcome their problems in society without additional assistance from the government. It is thought that this form of racism has replaced to a large degree, the older and more explicit forms of racism in the past, or the "open bigotry," (McConahay, 1986) that was based on the belief that African Americans were biologically inferior (Kinder & Sanders, 1996).

Symbolic racism was the concept from which *modern racism* was derived. It was essentially a new racial attitude that held resentment towards the special favors granted to African Americans. These special favors by the government came in the form of reaching a racial quota in jobs and education and were seen as reverse discrimination by some Whites (Sears, 1988). Symbolic racism appears to have emerged from the controversy over racial policy between those who differ in racial attitudes, ideology, and political identification, where these

differences are symbolic predispositions that influence political attitudes and behavior, which ultimately impact the direction of social policies.

Aversive racism is a concept that was introduced by Dovidio et al., (2002) to describe the conflict that White people have with the denial of personal prejudice and holding negative feelings or views towards African Americans. As indicated by Dovidio and Gaertner (2004), due to current cultural values, having beliefs in fairness and racial equality are important to White people so although some may hold negative views and personal prejudices towards certain groups of people, they may also deny its existence or openly acknowledge it. Unlike the explicit and openly hostile forms of racism, aversive racism may include "discomfort, uneasiness, disgusts, and sometimes fear (of African Americans), and involve a "pro-in-group" response rather than "anti-out-group" towards racial and ethnic minorities to avoid the label of bigotry and promoting a non-prejudice self-image" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004).

A more recent description of racial microaggression was offered by Sue et al., (2007). This description defined racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007). As indicated by Sue et al., (2007) racial microaggressions are associated with a pattern of disrespect that include a range of interactions that include underlying racial messages and assumptions such as in the example that they use in their article "you are not important enough to be noticed," and "people of color are less qualified." Sue et al., (2007) also introduce a taxonomy of the various types of microaggression and identified three classifications that include micro-assaults, micro-insults, and micro-invalidations. Micro-assaults are explicit forms of aggression such as the use the words "Chink," and/or "Gook" to refer to APIs. Micro-insults are less visible

more subtle forms of aggression that can be delivered through behaviors or communication such as assuming that all APIs are good at math and science. Lastly, micro-invalidations are potentially the most insidious form of microaggression because they undermine "rights and opportunities that may be of vital importance to stigmatized groups and because they negate the significance of identity in the lives of marginalized individuals." (Sue, 2010). This is evident based in the model minority myth and the forever foreigner stereotypes because they create the assumption that all APIs are doing well and are not in need of academic support and that even American-born APIs are still foreign. In addition, the process of racialization for API immigrants can also be viewed as a process of micro-invalidation as APIs have a racial identity imposed on them instead of being accepted based on their ethnicity.

Defining Racial Microaggressions

The impact of racial microaggressions have been studied across several racial groups and have revealed a number of important things including information about how students and people in general have struggled and endured racial microaggressions. These issues often revolve around mental health issues and stressors that are related to stress, anxiety, and even trauma (Harrell, 2000). However, these issues can impact physical problems such as eating disorders as will be presented in the following sections (Gilbert 2011). Yet, even with these findings, there remain many questions to be answered surrounding other aspects of racial microaggressions with different populations because studies have suggested that different racial groups have different interpretations, ways of processing, and consequences with racial microaggressions based on the different types they encounter. For example, some groups may experience more of one type of racial microaggression. This is likely related to the racial assumptions that are designated for a specific group. As numerous studies have revealed, these

microaggressions are often related to specific stereotypes that are aimed at a specific racial group and where some have racially charged meaning across different groups (Constantine, 2007; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Fries-Britt, & Griffin, 2007; Johnson, 2012; Michael-Makri, 2010; Nadal et al., 2008; Nadal et al., 2012; Nadal et al., 2014; Orelus, 2013; Solorzano et al., 2000; Sue & Constantine, 2007; Talbert, 2012; Watkins, 2012; Yosso et al., 2009).

Some examples of how racial microaggressions focus on specific races includes the assumptions that African Americans and Latinos are seen as less intelligent (Johnson, 2012; Michael-Makri, 2010; Solorzano et al., 2000; and Steele & Aronson,1995), and APIs are viewed as foreigners (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007). Within the higher education setting, students may experience one type more than the other and may be impacted by the types differently as well based on their race. Hence, encounters with racial microaggressions could be very different depending on one's racial identity. However, APIs are more likely to experience and are more impacted by environmental microaggressions than African Americans and Latina/o's because of the lack of representation in the social sphere that include the media, government and society (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007).

Impact of Racial Microaggressions and Students of Color

Racial microaggressions have been found to impact the experience of students of color including their academic performance, their physical, and mental health. The research on racial microaggressions on the impact of academic performance of students of color indicates that these encounters can produce a number of different stressors that can undermine students of color in higher education settings. For instance, Steele et al., (1995) examined the test taking performance of African Americans and White students while in the presence of racial threats. Each group was given a test with a different label that represented a different level of racial

threat. In all, there were three labels. These labels included "Intellectual ability," "Problem Solving," and a "Challenge Condition" for the test takers. The findings revealed that when African American students took the test labeled "Intellectual ability," they did poorer than their White counterparts. However, when they took the tests with the other labels, the results were similar to the White test takers. The authors suggested that African American students did poorer on the test labeled "Intellectual ability" because of the threat of the stereotype, or microaggression that indicated that they were considered to be of lesser intelligence than White students (Steele & Aronson, 1995). In another study, Watkins (2012) also revealed an association between racial microaggressions and academic performance for African Americans. Her study examined how African American college students attending predominantly White institutions (PWI) self-regulate racial stressors. Watkins suggested that when African Americans internalize negative images from stereotypes, their sense of vulnerability increases while experiencing a decrease in academic performance, motivation, and self-efficacy. Her study revealed that participants with higher levels of cultural congruence adjusted better academically, socially, and emotionally.

Meanwhile, Watkins (2012) reported that there are two ways that African Americans have improved their cultural congruence in college to enhance their experience. The first is the role of support; providing social support resources and an adequate amount of social relationships can assist African American students with their adjustment process, which then increases their satisfaction in college. The second is through self-regulation by means of rumination. Rumination has been seen to have a positive impact on college cultural congruence when employed in the face of ambiguous racial exchanges (Watkins, 2012). However, apart from Watkin's (2012) findings, systems of support are likely to vary across student populations

and their higher education settings. Also, rumination may also have different effects on students and may not always have positive results. Lastly, colleges and universities may vary in their ability to deal with racial microaggressions and potentially lack the resources and awareness needed to serve their students of color effectively.

Sylvia et al., (1998) revealed that racial climates may be hostile and negative due to cultures having common perceptions, attitudes, and expectations that are based on race related stereotypes and microaggressions. A climate consisting of these factors can have different impacts on different ethnic and racial groups regardless of the level of diversity on campus (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998). Hurtado et al., (1998) reported that African American students have lower performance when in a hostile learning environment and indicated that having a diverse group of students can enhance learning and complex thinking. The enhancement of diversity can also minimize racial conflict under certain conditions and improve the experiences of this group and others. These conditions may require fundamental changes for the institution, such as a shift in perception of diverse students in terms of how they are viewed and valued (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998).

The academic performance of Latino Americans has also been impacted by racial microaggressions. A study by Yosso, Smith, and Ceja (2009) revealed that Latina/o American students encounter racial microaggressions interpersonally and institutionally, which have a disruptive impact on their ability to participate in the classroom. As with African American students, the findings suggested that assumptions of inferiority can have a profound impact on their ability to perform. For Latina/o students, isolation affected their level of participation in the classroom. One participant reported that she felt her intelligence was called into question and she was not allowed to join several study groups in the classroom because of it. Other Latina/o

students expressed having similar feelings as they were isolated in their corners by their peers who congregated across the room. This left them in an uncomfortable situation where they felt frustrated and invisible to their fellow students.

Participants in this study also indicated that faculty avoided them as well (Yosso, Smith, & Ceja, 2009). One student reported that a professor who had previously refused to meet him at a certain time due to conflicting hours had made an exception to meeting a White student. As indicated in this study, with the situation being that Latina/o students feel isolated, have limited access to support, and are assumed to be less intelligent, it is evident that students from this population are not receiving an inequitable college experience when compared to their White peers.

As for API students, their experiences with racial microaggressions in the higher education setting is somewhat different as indicated in a study by Chiang (2011). Chiang (2011) explored the relationship between racial environments and educational outcomes for this group. The results indicated that APIs who have relationships with a variety of racial and ethnic groups during their teen years appear to have better academic performance than those who remain around homogenous groups of friends. Another finding in the study indicated that when APIs are in higher education environments that are predominantly API, they experience less racial microaggressions and performed better in their academics. However, within a homogenous setting, it was reported that API students have less interaction with faculty and experienced an increase of psychological distress. The author suggested that it was due to the pressure from competition with other API students. Interestingly, although API students who attend predominantly White institutions (PWIs) experience more racial microaggressions they also

experience less psychological distress in those settings due to having less pressure from competing with students of other racial groups (Chiang, 2011).

Meanwhile, unlike other students of color, API students have to deal with the stereotype of being a model minority and perpetual foreigner. In his study on the racial experiences of API students in college, Choi (2011) found that these stereotypes continue to affect API students; the perception that APIs are intelligent and that other minority groups should aspire to become more like them creates a false perception of APIs that can impact on their identity development. The API students unconsciously internalize these assumptions, allowing them to become a part of their identities as indicated by Choi (2011). Indirectly, this stereotype can potentially impact API students academically regarding their choices of majors. A previously held assumption of API students is that they are good in the math and sciences; recently, a new area that is added to the list is business administration. With these assumptions comes increased pressure for API students to go into these areas, which can potentially have negative consequences for students who may not be passionate about the subject. As for the stereotype that APIs are foreigners, this assumption depicts APIs as untrustworthy and creates feelings of being an outsider and can potentially lead to isolation and disconnect from peers and professors.

The following sections will present examples of how racial microaggressions have different impacts across racial groups. These sections will address how these populations are impacted physically, mentally, and academically. What will also be revealed is a noticeable gap in the literature on the subject matter of racial microaggressions for APIs, indicating the current limitations of the research on this subject in regard to the impact of racial microaggressions on people from Southeast Asia such as the Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. The following sections will begin with the physical and mental impact from racial microaggressions.

Impact on physical and mental health. The consequences of racial microaggressions do not only impact academic performance but also the physical and mental health of those who experience them. Students who experience racial microaggressions can experience several types of consequences including a combination of psychological distress, depressive symptoms, and emotional problems in addition to poor academic performance (Nadal, et al., 2014; Sue, et al., 2008; Sue, et al., 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000).

Experiencing microaggressions can lead to other physical problems such weight gain, and loss of appetite. Other studies have found that experiences with microaggressions are so detrimental that even having a perception that an experience was racist has a negative impact on physical health. Hill, Kobayashi, and Hughes (2007) examined the relationship between perceived racism and increased blood pressure among African American people and found a potential association between the two variables. They suggested that when in the presence of an environmental stimuli that is perceived as racist, African Americans experience stress that stays with them over time, affecting their physical health. African American college students reported experiencing higher levels of racism that impacted their health by elevating their blood pressure during the day and when asleep. Whether in the form of blatant racism or a racial microaggression, if the situation was perceived as a racial aggression at some level, such as when a professor is perceived to be assuming a student is less intelligent, he/she can experience an elevation in blood pressure (LaBarron, Kobayashi, and Hughes, 2007). A similar finding for African Americans has also been found in another study by Fang and Myers (2001), but overall little is known about the physical effects of racial microaggression for other racial groups (Fang & Myers, 2001).

Apart from the few studies that examined the physical problems associated with racial microaggressions, the research has examined the mental health consequences for various racial groups. Although much of the literature indicated the frequent occurrences of emotional problems such as anger and frustration, psychological distress, and depressive symptoms as well as an association between the three due to exposure to racism, a handful of studies have also indicated that these experiences are associated with other mental health conditions such as fear and paranoia (Sue et al., 2007; Sauceda, 2009; Watkins, 2012), where people of color fear potential consequences of being viewed negatively as the "angry minority." Interestingly, at the other end of the racial spectrum, Whites also have fears around racism as indicated by Constantine and Sue (2007), mostly relative to being perceived as racist, confronting their privilege, and taking responsibility in helping end racism. Sleep disturbances and depression were also associated with racial microaggressions (Steffan & Bowden, 2006). Steffan and Bowden (2006) found that sleep disturbance affected the association between depressive symptoms and perceived racism, indicating that how people perceive racism can impact their health. Lastly, eating disorders were also a problem that has been related to racism (Dahlia & Lieberman, 2010; Connolly, 2011; Cheng, Tran, Miyake, & Kim, 2017). The results of these studies indicated that women across racial groups including that of African American, Asian American, and Latinas may be vulnerable to eating disorders as a result of experiences with racism. Connolly (2011) reported that the body mass index of African American women was significantly correlated with the everyday discrimination scale, among other variables. For Asian American women, eating disorders were indirectly associated with a combination of what they perceived to be racism, being viewed as a foreigner, and being teased about their race and ethnicity as indicated by Cheng et al., (2017). Lastly, Dahlia (2010) examined the role of racial,

ethnic, and cultural factors for African American women and Latinas and indicated through a number of different studies that eating disorders remain a problem among these groups.

Regarding the impact of racial microaggressions across racial groups, most have focused on mental health and emotional problems. For instance, for African American students, researchers revealed that African Americans students experience feeling invisible in the classroom as one student had mention how being viewed as numerical racial minority meant that she was going to be ignored. Her rational was that when a teacher sees that there are fewer numbers of "you," they are less likely to address your concerns (Solorzano et al., 2000). A study on the effects of racial microaggressions in the college setting found that African American students felt that their peers and professors thought less of them and were not likely to address their concerns because of stereotypes. They also felt ignored and that their ideas were omitted and distorted and were held with low expectations to the extent that when they succeeded, the instructor assumed that they cheated (Solorzano, et al., 2000). The perceptions created isolating and often uncomfortable spaces where these African American students felt upset, stupid, and in need of proving themselves to other members of the campus community (Solorzano & Yosso, 2000). These findings are similar with those of another study conducted by Michael-Makri (2010) who examined perceptions of racial microaggressions among racial and ethnic minority graduate students in counseling programs that have been accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The study reported that graduate students in CACREP counseling programs experience moderate levels of racial microaggressions. The higher scores were in the areas of being (a) asked to represent their racial/ethnic group; (b) treated overly friendly or in a superficial way; (c) and having others be fascinated by them/viewing them as exotic (Michael-Makri, 2010).

Other studies with similar findings also reported that African American students felt unwelcomed and assumed to be less intelligent. Johnson (2012) found that these students felt shocked and angry, especially when others in the classroom appeared surprised about the notion that African Americans can be intelligent. This was especially frustrating and uncomfortable when these participants were the only student of color in the classroom during conversations on sensitive topics like slavery. Students in this study also reported feeling aggravated and even infuriated when they were pulled over by the police as they traveled to and from their schools. Overall, the study indicated that African American students experience a high level of emotional distress in and around their college experiences due to racial microaggressions, making adjustment a difficult process (Johnson, 2012).

African American students experience a considerable number of stressors by their peers, professors, and the overall college environment. A study revealed that many of these stressors for this racial group were directly associated with racial microaggressions, emerging from stereotypes and assumptions made about them (Michael-Markri, 2010). Other studies also show that stressors can include but are not limited to being the only person of color in the classroom (Johnson, 2012), having to represent one's entire race (Michael-Makri, S., 2010), feeling the pressure to present one's self in a certain way to against assumptions made about African American students (Fries-Britt & Griffen, 2007), not having access to faculty and academic support when needed (Johnson, 2012; Michael-Makri, 2010; Solorzano et al., 2000), and having to constantly explain their differences to Whites (Tabari, 2013).

Furthermore, Studies also revealed that psychological distress could derive from racist social environments and situations, such as the systematic profiling of African Americans and their overrepresentation in jails and prisons. More specifically, the rates of imprisonment and

employment for this group are disturbing, where nearly one-third of African men between the ages of 20 to 29 were in the criminal justice system. This group also experiences having the lowest rate of employment and income when compared to Whites (Western & Pettit, 2005). Another racist social situation for African American men is the notion of the *invisibility syndrome* (Franklin, 1999), individuals in this group tend to be perceived through the lens of negative assumptions and stereotypes regardless of their personal achievements and other positive attributes. An example of this is frequently observed when highly successful African Americans have difficulty catching a cab due to the assumption that they are criminals.

In a recent study that explored the persistence of African American students in their undergraduate experience, Tabari (2013) revealed that racial stressors are a common occurrence for many of them. Success for some of these participants meant confronting these issues head on and educating those around them. An example of this was described by a student who shared a story about being laughed at by a White girl for wearing a stocking on his head. He then went on to explain to her that it was due to his hair. Although using racial microaggressions as an internal resource to push themselves to become successful, one can only imagine what it might feel like to be asked these types of questions daily throughout one's undergraduate experience.

With challenges, college can easily be a very stressful experience for any racial and ethnic minority group. In fact, a study by Smith and his colleagues (2011) revealed that racial microaggressions and society problems contribute to more than 40% of the environmental stress for African American students who attend predominantly White institutions. Interestingly, individuals with higher degrees have more experiences with racial microaggressions. These stressors are cumulative and are harmful to their health and overall quality of life. The authors also revealed that African Americans also experience what they call racial battle fatigue, when

they have spent a considerable amount of time and energy dealing with these issues throughout their lives. Many of them become so overwhelmed that even hearing other African Americans describe their encounters with racism can trigger anxiety or sympathizing (Smith et al., 2011).

A study by Fissori (2010) reported that African Americans students often feel underserved and longed for something better. Yet, it was also reported that African American students were realistic about their situation and did not expect things to change. They had an understanding that more enriching learning environments existed but were reserved for White students. This was based on the notion that only Whites could afford such schools and only they knew where to look for them. This left them with a sense of hopeless. Fissori (2010) also reported that the impact of racial microaggressions were cumulative for the participants, where problems from the past and present were simultaneously affecting these students.

The feeling of hopelessness and longing for a better college experience is a concern that is related to the loss of control in one's environment, which is found to be important for African American students. A study by Lambert, Herman, Bynum, & Ialongo (2009) revealed that having a sense of control in academia or in the social setting for African American females, were indirectly impacted by racism. In other words, exposure to racism negatively impacted trust in their own ability to obtain desired academic outcomes. This study also indicated that the source of "low perceived control," was racism and that African American females were more vulnerable to depression than males among the youth (Lambert, et al., 2009).

Sue et al., (2008) examined some of the themes of racial microaggressions that African Americans experienced and were able to identify six that were common among the participants. The six themes included (a) African Americans are viewed as less intelligent, (b) viewed as second class citizens, (c) assumed to be criminals, (d) assumed to be inferior in status, and (c)

their cultural values and communication styles were not valued and deemed inferior to Whites. In addition to being stressors these themes can lead to a range of emotional problems, as these participants also felt guilt and sadness as the themes continued to stay with them. Researchers mentioned that as participants were retelling their stories, there was "crying/tearing, fluctuations in voice volume, (and) stammering over words" which indicated not only stress, but also trauma and other depressive symptoms. African Americans generally experience depression, anxiety, and self-doubt due to the nature of these experiences, its long-term effects, and having to deal multiple issues simultaneously. This takes a toll on their physical, mental, and spiritual health (Huber & Solorzano, 2015). Huber and Solorzano (2015) also provided that this does not only occur in individual cases but in entire communities when the majority of a particular race from a community have these experiences, creating humiliation for some on what one participant would call "fear as a way of life."

Meanwhile, the research on racial microaggressions and mental health has also examined the experience of Latina/o college students. Sauceda (2010) conducted a study that examined the degree to which Latina/o college students experience racial microaggressions on campus and how they coped with these issues. This study indicated that peers mostly inflict racial microaggressions and that these encounters occur across several different settings including such places as the classroom, at a party, and even at home (Sauceda, 2010). The study also revealed that students from this racial group cope with these experiences in two main ways, either through support seeking from peers or forbearance, where students conceal their concerns to avoid burdening others. When addressing these issues, Latina/o students are left frustrated when their concerns are minimized or dismissed by peers and professors. They also experienced emotional turmoil when deciding how to cope because they feared that their friends will view them as the

"angry minority," as well as being a burden to them (Sauceda, 2010). These fears led many of them to choose forbearance as a way of dealing with their experiences (Sauceda, 2010). Based on the limited research it is evident that Latina/o American students also experienced similar emotional problems due to racial microaggressions. Latina/o American students also experienced racial battle fatigue as indicated in a study conducted by Franklin et al., (2014). This study revealed that racial microaggressions were associated with factors that included "frustration, being more aware of racism, irritability, mood changes, shock, disappointment, and agitation," (Franklin et al., 2014). The study also revealed that Latina/o students could also experience physiological-related stress; where they felt muscle aches, back pains, and the inability to sleep.

Relative to education, the authors also revealed that racial battle fatigue affected retention and graduation rates for this group, which may be related to the findings by Yosso, Smith, and Ceja (2009), who revealed that Latina/o students experienced a great amount of stress and reported difficulty asking for academic assistance from faculty members.

Another study by Moradi and Risco (2006) examined the relationship between perceived discrimination and psychological distress for a sample consisting of Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Colombian Americans, and revealed four relationships between psychological stress and other variables. The findings included (a) that perceived discrimination was associated with higher levels of stress, with "personal control" being a mediating variable; (b) that self-esteem was a partial mediating variable between the relationship of personal control and distress; (c) that acculturation was indirectly associated with personal control, higher levels of self-esteem and a decrease in distress; and (d) that United States acculturation had a direct association to higher levels of distress. Latina/o American students also experienced high levels of hopelessness as

indicated by the study mentioned earlier by Sauceda (2010), who revealed that students from this group would rather go through forbearance than seek support from their peers or professors. In a sense, this is the isolation of one's emotions and racial reality. Latina/o students are isolated not by their own will, but by students who avoid interacting with them (Yosso, et al., 2009). Throughout their lives, they acquire a heightened awareness of their racial identity and are constantly reminded by it in the academic settings and situations that require them to interact with White students and faculty. Being denied because of their race has become so normal that one participant mentioned that after being excluded from a study group, she thought to herself "Oh, well, no big deal," and indicated that it is something that occurs frequently. Normalizing these experiences are not without consequences as the research also suggested that that they experienced feeling out of place, self-doubt, and were constantly wondering why students and professors did not want to work with them (Yosso, et al., 2009). These are stressors that evoke symptoms of depression and anxiety and make them feel rejected and constrained from addressing any of their concerns.

While the research on the experience of APIs with microaggressions and mental health is limited, it provided important initial insights into their experience. Sue et al., (2007) found that APIs go through a process of determining whether a microaggression actually occurred, how they should feel about the experience, and how they should respond to what just happened. This includes going through a frustrating process of making up excuses for friends who make racists jokes, or assumptions about them through rationalizing or denying the reality of their experience. Confronting these issues is difficult because it would often lead to denial, defensiveness, and have a negative impact on their relationship with that individual (Sue, et al., 2007). Another aspect of this frustration of these students was related to the dialogue on race, being based mostly

on a Black-White binary. The underlying assumption suggests that APIs are not a minority group, nor do they experience discrimination, and that their racial concerns are not important. They are positioned in a contradictory reality of being viewed as White but not fully accepted as one (Sue, et al., 2007).

Nadal et al., (2014) found that API students experience psychological stress differently. They examined the relationship between racial microaggressions and self-esteem and reported that these encounters had a negative impact on the self-esteem of API students. Specifically, API students felt isolated and their self-worth was impacted. These participants also reported experiencing more exoticization and environment racial microaggressions than both African and White students as indicated by Nadal et al., (2014). However, their findings also suggested that African American participants reported being treated more like a second-class citizen and/or criminal as compared to Asian Americans.

Ong et al., (2013) were able to identify how frequently these encounters were in their study that focused on psychological correlates of racial microaggressions in the daily lives of APIs. They revealed that of a sample population of 152 API students, 78% of them reported having encountered racial microaggressions within the two-week period that the study was conducted. Furthermore, these students reported that these experiences led to somatic symptoms, poor psychological adjustment, feeling frustrated, belittled, alienated, and constantly invalidated (Ong et al., 2013). Micro-invalidations were found to account for over 75% of the explained variance, making them the biggest cause of stress where much of psychological energy of API college students were spent determining the motives of those who enacted the aggressions (Ong et al., 2013). Another study by Nadal et al., (2012) that focused specifically on Filipino Americans, supported the findings by Ong et al., (2013) indicating that micro-invalidations

accounted for a good portion of these aggressions. Nadal et al., (2012) reported that APIs were assumed to be all the same in terms of looks and ethnicity, and that their cultural values and behaviors were pathologized in terms of the way they eat and talk. In some cases, White people were not even aware that the Philippines is a country, leaving Filipinos to feel shocked, angry, and frustrated for being treated as an outsider when they are born in this country and are Americans.

These encounters also yielded similar consequences for API students. Cress and Ikeda's (2003) study on the relationship between the campus climate and depressive symptoms for APIs presented some importing findings. The first finding indicated that among API students, a negative perception of the campus climate can predict an individual's level of depression. Students who view the environment as unwelcoming or hostile may have an increased level of depression. Furthermore, a second finding suggested that students with low levels of involvement in social activities and interactions with their peers and instructors were positively associated with depression. Lastly, the study also found that APIs are more likely to experience feelings of depression as compared to other groups on campus and were also more likely to suffer emotional disturbance. Meanwhile, Wang et al., (2011) also revealed that API students expected to be rejected because of their racial identity, which led to feelings of shame and decreased self-esteem, which has been related to symptoms of psychological distress and depression among other mental health problems.

Research on the Hmong American students in higher education and racial microaggressions has been very limited to a single study by Kwan (2015), who examined how anti-immigrant views and subtle forms of racism affect "second-linguistic-generation Hmong Americans." Yvonne's (2015) study revealed that language was important to Hmong Americans

as exemplified by statements made from participants about how they wanted to perfect their English, as to remove them away from the perpetual foreigner stereotype.

What is interesting is that APIs have historically been targets of racial discrimination and yet, they have received less attention than other racial groups on these experiences according to a study by Wang et al., (2011). The review of the current literature on the impact of racial microaggressions on API college students demonstrates a noticeable gap in the research. Currently, there is little research about the impact of racial microaggressions on people from Southeast Asia such as the Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. This is of great concern considering that an increasing number of these students continue to enroll in higher education. Hence, there is a critical need for further investigation about the relationship between mental health and racial microaggressions for these student populations so that higher education does not just recruit these students but also supports them appropriately in order that they are retained and can graduate successfully.

Alienation

Alienation among college students is a subject that has been frequently studied in the recent decades. Researchers have investigated this subject from a variety of perspectives including the experiences and causes of alienation on specific student populations in higher education (Schmidt & Sedlacek, 1970; Prisco, 1979; Taylor, 2000; Mighty, 2016;), effects of alienation for these populations (Redden, 2002; James, 2006; Kacire, 2015); and responses to alienation (Holland, 1997; Smith, 1999).

Causes and experiences. Among the studies that explored the experiences and causes of alienation, Schmidt and Sedlacek (1970) found that students who were more alienated knew fewer faculty/instructors and needed more counseling. They also reported that students who

were dating felt more alienated. In another study that examined the differences in alienation between female college students who were involved with a sorority and those who were not, Prisco (1979) indicated that those who were independent from sororities scored higher in alienation in terms of social isolation. A third study that examined the experiences of Native American students attending a predominantly White institution (PWI) revealed these students felt isolated, lonely, and reported discomfort because of receiving stares, a lack of respect, comments, and stereotypes (Taylor, 2000). These experiences were alienating to Native American students and created a hostile learning environment (Taylor, 2000). Similarly, a study that examined the causes of alienation among African American students at a PWI revealed that the institutional environment was directly associated with alienation (Mighty, 2016). The higher the level of support the environment offered, the lower the alienation that African Americans experienced. However, the study reported that the relationship between social integration and faculty involvement with levels of alienation were weakly associated (Mighty, 2016).

The effects of alienation. As for the effects of alienation, Redden (2002) indicated that social alienation is an important factor that can affect the experiences of African American students in the higher education setting. Her study revealed that those students who experienced social alienation were "less effective socially, had fewer friends, felt lonelier, and participated less in extracurricular activities" (Redden, 2002). Consistent with these findings James (2006) explored the effects of alienation on African American students in PWIs and found that students experienced feelings of alienation, isolation, meaningless, powerlessness, and disenfranchisement due to stress and strained relationships within the academic setting. The study also revealed that about 25% of the participants had experienced a declining self-image/concept after attending a PWI (James, 1998). These finding are not surprising as Kacire

(2015), revealed in his study of how alienation impacted satisfaction, indicated that alienation explained 52% of general satisfaction.

Responses to alienation. With alienation having many potential negative effects on students, researchers have also explored different ways in which alienation can be prevented and/or overcome. A study by Holland (1997) revealed that an increase of involvement in programs could help decrease the level of alienation experienced. Holland (1997) also revealed that program affiliation influenced outcomes positively for students of color and that gender and/or racial/ethnicity mediated this relationship. Hence, engaging students in programs and increasing their affiliations in this area would be one method of addressing alienation.

A study by Smith (1999) offered a different approach to addressing the problem of alienation in the classroom from her investigation of how faculty can be more effective teachers. She interviewed faculty and students across colleges and universities and revealed that through caring for students, creating community within the classroom, and transcending class subjects "beyond the mundane," the problem of alienation can be addressed (Smith, 1999). These studies offer clues as to how to address alienation and how different these approaches can be.

Furthermore, researchers have also focused on a variety of topics in regard to the relationship between alienation and other variables such as marijuana users (Harris, 1969), identity (Merwin, 1971; Targuin & Cook-Cotton, 2008; Brock-Murray, 2010), student attitudes (Spivey-Mooring, 2008; Lewis, Coursol, Bremer, & Kormarenko, 2015; Oksuz & Ozturk, 2017), religiosity (Huffman, 1988; Hoffman, 1996), academic performance and success (Holland, 1997; Harrison, 1999), and retention of college students (Gordon, 1998; Harrison, 1999; Paladino, 2004; Talbert, 2012). All these studies allude to the complexities surrounding alienation and the

range of association it can have with various aspects of an individual's personal and social life, as well as their identity development and decisions to remain in higher education.

However, at this time, there is no research that has examined the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong American students in higher education. This is a gap in the literature that is of great importance and in need of further investigation due to (a) the reality of racial experiences that students of color face in their daily lives; (b) the negative implications that racial microaggressions and alienations have on students of color as indicated by the body of research provided in this chapter; and (c) the importance of creating a safe learning environment for students of all backgrounds including Hmong American students.

Conclusion

The relationship between racial microaggressions and mental health problems for APIs have been found in many studies, however, the amount of attention focused on this group is limited when compared to other racial groups (Choi, 2011; Yip, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008; Gee et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2007; Bhui et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2003; Espiritu, 1997). A review of the literature on the impact of racial microaggression on college students of color has indicated that there is very limited research in this area. In fact, there is very limited research on the impact of racial microaggressions on the API college students including Hmong American students. It is important to understand the experience of this population as some of the studies suggest, racial microaggressions hold different meaning because of the unique racial assumptions that are made for each group.

Combatting racial microaggressions remains one of the biggest challenges for the Hmong because of their internalization of inadequacy and shame (DePouw, 2018). Given that there is no research that examines the impact of racial microaggressions on the emotional well-being of

Hmong college students, and that these students who belong to a community that has a unique history in the United States, are increasingly enrolling in higher education, there is a critical need to understand their experience, including that of alienation.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter three provides an overview of the research design and methodology that were used to investigate the research questions in this study. The chapter begins by revisiting the purpose of the study followed by a description of the settings and participants, procedure, instruments, research design, research questions, screening of data, and summary. Each of the sections will also include a rationale for the choices made in relation to the research questions in this study.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of Hmong American students in higher education. More specifically, it examined the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong college students, and whether gender differences existed. Racial micro-aggressions were measured by the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) and university alienation was measured by the University Alienation Scale (UAS; Burbach et al. 1972).

Participants

The participants in this study were Hmong American college students recruited from the Hmong Student Association (HSA) at two institutions in the Midwest. One was a Research I institution with an enrollment of about 55,000 students and the other was a comprehensive institution with an enrollment of 18,000 students.

The final sample consisted of 97 undergraduate students who identified as Hmong American students who were enrolled at two universities in the Midwest. They consisted of 37%

(*n = 36*) participants who identified as males and 63 % (*n = 61*) participants who identified as female. The age of students ranged from 18-24 where 45% (*n = 44*) of these participants were between 20-21yrs old; 36 % (*n = 35*) were between 18-19 years old; 12 % (*n = 12*) were between 22-23yrs old; and 6 % (*n = 6*) were 24yrs or older.

The majority of students in the sample were sophomores 29% (*n = 28*), followed by seniors 24% (*n = 23*) were seniors; 19% (*n = 18*) were freshmen; 23% (*n = 22*) were juniors; and 5% (*n = 5*) indicated that they were neither of the four categories, but an undergraduate. As one student had explained, he was a super-senior. Among these students, for student enrollment status, the majority were full time students at 93% (*n = 90*), while the rest 6% (*n = 6*) were part-time students.

About 60% (*n = 58*) of students reported their mother's level of education, where they indicated that the majority 38% (*n = 37*) of their mothers had a high school degree or below. This was followed by an associate degree with 11% (*n = 11*); bachelor's degree with 6% (*n = 6*); 2% (*n = 2*) with master's degree; and 2% (*n=2*) with doctorate degree. Several students, 40% (*n=39*) were unable to report their *Mother's level of education*.

For participants' responses to Father's level of education, 37% (*n = 36*) indicated their father's education to be at the high school degree or below; 10% (*n = 10*) selected associate degree; 8% (*n = 8*) selected bachelor's degree; 5% (*n = 5*) selected master's degree; and 1% (*n = 1*) selected doctorate degree. Meanwhile, 38% (37) students were unable to report this information for *Father's Level of Education.*

Lastly, regarding *Household income*, most of the students, 51% (*n = 49*), indicated a family income of $31,402 – $41,868, while 13% (*n = 13*) did not respond to this item.

For this study, based on an apriori power analysis for an F-Test with a MANOVA through the G*Power (3.1.9.2) statistical software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009), a sample population of 66 was required. The sample size of 66 was based on the parameters of producing a medium effect size for two levels, represented by the two groups in the study; males and females, and two independent variables, represented by the two samples from each of the instruments; the REMS and UAS. Using G*Power, the parameters that were recommended suggested an effect size of .25, alpha level of .05, and power level of .80 (Faul et al., 2009).

Procedure

At the initial part of this process, the investigator requested approval for data collection from the Institutional review boards (IRB) of both institutions. Requesting approval from IRB required the investigator to identify the IRB process for each of the institutions and prepare proposals accordingly. When the proposals were completed, they were sent to each of the IRB offices for review. Once IRB approval had been obtained from both institutions, the investigator contacted the Hmong American student organizations from both institutions. The investigator contacted the board members of each organization electronically by email. The email included an introduction to the investigator and the study. In addition, the email also contained a request for a meeting between the investigator and the board members to discuss the request for support. Once the meetings were established, the investigator prepared packets of information relating to the study for each of the board members. These packets included the consent form (see Appendix C) and instruments that were used during data collection. At the meetings, the investigator began with introductions and then proceed to share the information packets with each of the board members. The investigator then described each document, made the request for support, and allowed time for discussion and questions. The request for support asked board

members for permission to allow the investigator to attend the general meetings of each student organizations for collecting data. The process was explained using the following steps. First, the investigator attended the general meeting where he introduced himself and the study. Secondly, he verbally went through the consent form to describe the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits involved, confidentiality and anonymity, and the voluntary nature of participation. Lastly, the investigator also offered an estimate of time required to complete the surveys, which was about 45 minutes depending on the nature of the questions and discussions that ensue during the data collection session. Once the board members gained a better understanding of the study, they were asked to decide on whether support would be provided. Once the board decided to provide support, dates and times for these meetings were arranged for data collection.

Before attending the general meetings, the investigator prepared enough information packets consisting of the consent forms, demographic sheet, the REMS survey, and the UAS survey. At the general meetings, the investigator started by introducing himself and the study. The investigator described the study, and the content of the consent form to detail its importance, the benefits and risks, and the voluntary nature of participation. Students were also given the opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns that they had about the study. Students who decided to not participate could leave the meeting. The investigator then began passing out the information packets to the remaining students.

Once the students received the information packets, the investigator then proceeded to review the consent form verbally as a reminder, and the other documents in the packet. Students were then be asked to sign the consent form before filling out the demographic form, (see Appendix D), the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) (see Appendix F), and the University Alienation Scale (UAS; Burbach, 1972) (Appendix E). Lastly,

directions were given to students to detach the consent form from the rest of the packet once they had completed filling out the forms and place them into separate piles at the location designated by the investigator.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study include the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011), the University Alienation Scale (UAS; Burbach, 1972) and the demographic sheet. Descriptions of each of the instruments are provided below.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions scale. The development of the REMS was in response to the need for a quantitative measure of racial micro-aggressions (Nadal, 2011). As mentioned by Nadal (2011), the instrument was developed through a process of reviewing the racial microaggression taxonomy (Sue et al., 2007) and other literature on the subject. The REMS is based upon a six-subscale model consisting of 45 items and is the first quantitative instrument that was designed to measure racial micro-aggressions. It has a total of seven scores, consisting of a total score and individual subscale scores for each of the six subscales that are used to measure the racial micro-aggression construct (Nadal, 2011).

As Nadal (2011) described, the six subscales measure the different types of racial microaggressions that are based on Sue's (2007) taxonomy and studies that had a focused on this subject. The REMS subscales include (a) *Assumptions of Inferiority,* (b) *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*, (c) *Micro-Invalidations,* (d) *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*, (e) *Environmental Microaggressions,* and (f) *Workplace and School Microaggressions*.

Each subscale score is calculated by dividing the sum of the corresponding items (e.g., a+b+c+d+e / 5, where "a" through "e" are the items associated with the subscale), divided by "5"

or the total number of items measuring that subscale. The total score is calculated by adding all scores for each subscale together by the total number of items in the instrument; 45.

The internal consistency reliability was determined in a separate study using a diverse sample population of 218 participants that consisted of "35% Latina/os, 20% African Americans, 13% multiracial persons, 12% Asian Americans, and 4% who did not identify with any of these categories" (Nadal, 2011). The results of the Nadal (2011) study revealed coefficient alphas above .70, as indicated : subscale 1: *Assumptions of Inferiority* (8 items; $\alpha = .86$); subscale 2: *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* (7 items; $\alpha = .82$); subscale 3: *Micro-Invalidations* (9 items; $\alpha = .79$); subscale 4: *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* (9 items; $\alpha = .76$); subscale 5: *Environmental Microaggressions* (8 items; $\alpha = .77$); and subscale 6: *Workplace and School Microaggressions* (5 items; $\alpha = .75$).

Within the same study, Nadal (2011) also evaluated the concurrent validity of the REMS by correlating this instrument with the Daily Life Experiences-Frequency (DLE-F) scale, which was a scale that has been proven to have high reliability coefficients for the different racial groups for comparison (Harrell, 2000). Results indicated that all of the REMS subscales were significantly correlated with the DLE-F scale with the following reported correlation coefficients: subscale 1: *Assumptions of Inferiority* with ($r = .57$, $p < .05$); subscale 2: *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* with ($r = .61$, $p < .05$); subscale 3: Microinvalidations with ($r = .51$, $p < .05$); subscale 4: *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* with ($r = .46$, $p < .05$); subscale 5: *Environmental Microaggressions* with ($r = -.21$, $p < .05$); and subscale 6: *Workplace and school Microaggressions* with ($r = .64$, $p < .05$.)" as reported by Nadal (2011). This correlation analysis is evidence of the strength of the

correspondence between the REMS and the DLE-F, suggesting that both instruments' measurements of these racial experiences were largely consistent.

University Alienation Scale. The UAS (Burbach, 1972) was designed to measure the multidimensionality of alienation. The instrument consists of three dimensions that include *Meaninglessness*, *Powerlessness*, and *Social Estrangement*. These three dimensions are measured by a Likert scale that ranged from 1 with "Strongly Disagree" to 5 with "Strongly Agree." The UAS consists of 24 questions where there are eight items for *Meaninglessness*, nine for *Powerlessness*, and seven for *Social Estrangement*, all representing the construct of university alienation.

The UAS (Burbach, 1972) was tested on a random sample of 428 students in a university location in the Northeast of the United States. A split-half technique was used to measure the reliability, producing coefficients for all three dimensions. The reliability coefficients produced were *Powerlessness* (9 items; $\alpha = .79$), *Meaninglessness* (8 items; $\alpha = .82$), and *Social Estrangement* (7 items; $\alpha = .92$).

Construct validity was determined through an item-to-total analysis and factorial analysis. The item-to-total correlation coefficient was found to be significant at an alpha level of .01, which indicated that the items within each of the dimensions were correlated; indicating that the items measured what they were supposed to be measuring. Criterion-related validity was determined by examining the correlation between the UAS and the Dean Scale (1956). A correlation matrix between the dimensions and total scores of the UAS and Dean Scale revealed that their dimensions were significant at the alpha level of .01. The means of both scales were correlated and statistically significant ($r = .58$, $p < .01$) meaning that they both were measuring

the same construct comparably, supporting the criterion-related validity of the UAS (Burbach, 1972).

Demographic Sheet. The demographic sheet that was used in the study included eight questions regarding different characteristics of the student (See Appendix D). Question one asked for the student participant's gender and has three options that include "female," "male," and "other." This question was used for RQ2, the comparison between groups regarding the association between the total scores of racial microaggressions and alienation. Question two asked for age where the student participant wrote in the response. Although the study was not directly considering age as a factor, it was collected to identify the age range within the group since "undergraduates" can include a wide range of participants. Question three asked for the participant's race/ethnicity, in case there were students who identified as multi-ethnic and/or multi-racial, which may have implications for other aspects beyond the study. Question four asked for the participant's year in school, which may be more important considering that the status of a freshmen, sophomore, junior, and/or senior is not defined by the number of years in school, but the number of credits obtained. For example, students who have been in higher education for two years can still be considered freshmen depending on the number of credits they have obtain. Question five asked for the student's current enrollment status being either full-time or part-time. Question six and seven asked for the mother's and father's education level where they could choose from five options that included a high school degree, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree. This question was particularly important because it could have also been interpreted as the level of acculturation, which might impact participant's interpretation of racism and/or alienation. For example, it is common among less acculturated Hmong families to isolate themselves from people of other races and

ethnicities. Lastly, question nine asked for household income and provided the option of ranges between $31,402 to $41,868; $41,869 to $125,608; $125,609 to $188,412; and $188,412 and above. These ranges were based on the PEW research center's class brackets. Since income is directly associated with education, as well as social status and class; it was assumed that participants from higher household incomes were more acculturated because they had access to more opportunities and privileges than those from lower household income families as indicated by the Education and Socioeconomic Status article published by the American Psychological Association (2018); hence, income was also an important factor to consider as it was an indicator of acculturation which may explain differences in the responses to the REMS and/or UAS.

Research Questions and Design

According to Heppner, Wampold, and Kivlighan (2008), the process of identifying the best approach is more about how useful it will be regarding research questions, recommendations from previous studies, and what has already been covered on the subject of interest among other factors. With the focus of this study being an examination of the relationship between variables using a sample directly from the population of interest, a descriptive research design is the most appropriate approach (Heppner, et al., 2008). The primary purpose of this study was to investigate (a) the association between racial microaggressions as measured by the REMS (Nadal, 2011) and alienation as measured by the UAS (Burbach, 1972); and (b) whether the relationship between the REMS and the UAS was mediated by gender. No experimental controls, nor any manipulation of the environment and/or variables were exercised as required by this approach (Heppner, et al., 2008).

Research question one (RQ1) focused on examining the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong American students in higher education:

1. RQ1: What is the relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education?

Research question two (RQ2) focused on examining whether there was a difference in the experiences with alienation and racial microaggressions between Hmong males' and females' in higher education.

2. RQ2: Is there a difference between Hmong college student males' and females' reported experiences of the composite of alienation, as measured by the UAS, and racial microaggressions, as measured by the composite REMS.

For RQ1, a correlation analysis was used to analyze the data because it was appropriate to use for examining the relationships among multiple variables. Where a multiple regression analysis can examine the relationship between multiple independent variables and one dependent variable, a correlation matrix can examine the relationship between all the subscales of the REMS and dimensions of the UAS. Hence, with the REMS having six subscales and the UAS with three dimensions, the application of a correlation matrix was the most appropriate. Rather than to conduct multiple single tests, a correlation matrix helped to minimize the chances of a Type I error by decreasing the number of tests conducted which then decreased the probability of creating a Type I error; also known as the Familywise Error (FWE) rate (Keppel & Wickens, 2004).

In a correlation analysis, the correlation coefficient also known as the Pearson's product moment correlation or *r*, indicates the nature of the linear relationship between variables (Heppner, et al., 2008). The correlation coefficient, r, has a range of 1 to -1, where one indicates a perfect linear relationship between two variables and -1 indicates the opposite, a negative

relationship to the highest degree (Heppner, et al., 2008). For example, suppose that as one variable increases, a second does as well at an equal rate; this would imply a perfect linear relationship of the strongest degree. However, most correlation coefficients are not perfect and often fall somewhere within the range with different strengths. According to Salkind (2011), the strongest correlations fall in between a .8 to 1.0 (very strong), followed by .6 to .8 (strong), .4 to .6 (moderate), .2 to .4 (weak), and .0 to .2 (weak or no relationship).

As for variance shared by the variables in the relationship, this can be calculated by taking the square of the correlation coefficient (r). For example, if r is .5, the variance is .5 multiplied by itself (.5), which is equaled to 25%. This 25% represents the percentage of what both variables can account for (or share) in the relationship and is also known as the coefficient of determination (Heppner, et al., 2008; Salkind, 2011).

However, prior to the use of a correlation analysis there were three assumptions that needed to be met according to Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (1999). These assumptions included (a) independence of observations; (b) normal distribution of the dependent variable; and (c) homoscedasticity. Independence of observations means that each participant is not influenced by other participants in a study or is not in two or more groups. For example, if a study has a treatment and a control group, participants should not be in both groups. The second assumption, normal distribution, meant that the distribution of the sample was normally distributed, which was supposed to be reflective of the assumption that the populations that the samples were taken from were normal as well (Mordkoff, 2016). Lastly, homoscedasticity meant that "the degree of random noise is always the same, regardless of the values of the x variables (Allison, 1999)." This was observed on a scatterplot where the degree of scatter was

consistent across the x-axis, with minimal extreme cases (Allison, 1999). A violation to any of these assumptions would have led to producing poor/inaccurate results.

To meet these assumptions, the following steps were necessary. For the first assumption, independence of observations, according to Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (1999) this can be addressed by looking at the research design and making sure that participants in the study are attempting the survey once and independently. This ensured that the data is not skewed by data from participants who repeated the survey several times. For the second assumption, normal distribution, Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (1999) identifies the dangers of failing to meet this assumption, indicating that skewness and kurtosis can affect the rates of Type I and Type II errors. Hence, they suggest to, first, examine the frequency histograms for the patterns between the observed and expected normal values. This offered a visual to see if the actual sample is normally distributed when compared to the shape of a bell curve. Secondly, they suggested checking for skewness and kurtosis by a formal test of statistical significance by using their coefficients to their corresponding standard errors through SPSS. Lastly, Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (1999) suggested that if the assumption of normality was violated, alternative correlation approaches should be considered, such as Spearman's rho.

Lastly, the third assumption, homoscedasticity was examined with bivariate scatter plots. Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (1999) suggests looking for "funnel" shape patterns on the plot, as it is an indication that this assumption is not being met. They indicated that the funnel shape has varying degrees, meaning that the more the pattern of the plots are shaped like a funnel, the higher the degree of heteroscedasticity, or the inconsistency of the scatter of the plots across the x-axis. With a high degree of heteroscedasticity, Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (1999) suggested that

data transformations should be considered and Pearson's product-moment coefficient "should be abandoned for tests that are designed for unequal variance conditions."

Furthermore, to ensure that the sample size is an appropriate size that is reflective of the population of interest in this study, an apriori test analysis for a correlation analysis was conducted through the G*Power (3.1.9.2) statistical software (Faul, et al., 2009). With the input parameters set to a two-tail test with a medium effect size of .30, alpha level of .05, power level of .80, and a null hypothesis "0," the software calculated a required sample size of 84 participants. This meant that with a sample size of 84 participants, there was an 80% chance of getting a significant result, assuming that there was a medium effect size or correlation between the two variables (Faul, et al., 2009; Cohen, 1988).

For RQ2, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the differences between males and females regarding their experiences with racial microaggressions and alienation. This was the most appropriate test for RQ2 because we are working with two variables and two groups and rather than running multiple analyses of variances (ANOVA), a MANOVA would minimize the risk of a type I error. With an ANOVA, there was a greater chance of incorrectly rejecting the null hypotheses when there are multiple tests being performed separately (Huberty & Morris, 1989).

As with the correlation analysis for RQ1, RQ2 also has a few assumptions that need to be met. There are three assumptions and they included having (a) a normal distribution; (b) linearity; and (c) homogeneity of variances and covariances. First, the MANOVA assumes that the sample has a normal distribution, meaning that outliers will need to be screened and taken out to prevent skewness. Secondly, linearity is the assumption that there is a linear relationship between all of the dependent variables and pairs of covariates. Lastly, homogeneity of variances

assumes that the variances across the independent variables and intercorrelations are equal (French, Macedo Oulsen, Waterson, and Yu, 2006).

Several steps were taken to fulfill these assumptions. For the first assumption of having a normal distribution, this was checked by examining the histograms for the consistency between the expected and observed values regarding how closely they resemble one another. As with RQ1, having a visual representation of the sample population curve will offer a perspective on how close it is to the expected values. Secondly, Onwuegbuzie and Daniel (1999) suggested searching for any skewness and kurtosis by a formal test of statistical significance by using their coefficients to their corresponding standard errors through SPSS. Lastly, with a moderately large sample population, the normality assumption was met based on the central limit theorem where the approximation of normality improves as the sample population increases. Therefore, having a sample population larger than suggested for the study was sufficient.

For assumption two, linearity, a process similar to checking the first assumption occurred. Nonlinearity was determined with a visual observation of the expected and observed points on a scatterplot as indicated by Allison (1999). This was tested by producing a scatterplot and identifying where all of the points of each variables are to determine if there is a linear relationship between the variables. In the case that the relationship is linear, the points will be largely distributed along the path of a diagonal line; however, if the points on the scatterplot is in any other shape, the data is not linear (Allison, 1999).

Lastly, for the third assumption of homogeneity of variances and covariances, this was tested through Levene's test of Equality of Error Variances in SPSS (Leech, Barrett, Morgan, 2011). Levene's will test if there are equal variances across groups. When the p-value is significant and less than the alpha level of .05, it is a violation of the assumption. When this

happens, a non-parametric equivalent of the test will be utilized, such as the Kruskal-Wallis test which is more appropriate if the assumption of homogeneity of variances has been seriously violated (Leech, et al., 2011).

Initially, an apriori power analysis for an F-Test with a MANOVA through the G*Power (3.1.9.2) statistical software (Faul et al., 2009) was used to calculate an appropriate sample size for this test. The software suggested a sample population of 66 and was based on the parameters of producing a medium effect size for two levels, represented by the two groups in the study; males and females, and two dependent variables, represented by the two samples from each of the instruments; the REMS and UAS. Using G*Power, the parameters that were recommended suggested an effect size of .25, alpha level of .05, and power level of .80 (Faul et al., 2013). However, since a larger sample size of 84 participants was suggested for RQ1 regarding a correlation analysis, this study used the larger number of participants at minimum.

Data Screening

The data was screened to minimize and prevent errors from misrepresenting the responses from participants. To ensure that the data was representative of the responses given by participants, the investigator (a) carefully reviewed the process of data entry and went over each item to make sure that they were entered correctly; (b) checked for missing data through identifying items that were not answered by participants and uncompleted forms; and (c) identified outliers in the set, or scores of items that were extreme that could potentially distort the means of the groups. This process helped to minimize the threat of misrepresentation (Salkind, 2011; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

In the case of missing data, there were several options to address this issue. For example, these approaches can include (a) excluding the participant's data from the set; (b) assume a value

based on the responses of other participants; or (c) use a value that is based on the average of responses on the item (Sauro, 2015). Among these approaches, assuming a value based on the responses of other participants was used. This value will be based on taking the average of the responses by participants of the study.

Outliers are data values that are considered extreme or unusually different in terms of size compared to the rest of the values (Aguinis, Gottfedson, & Joo, 2013). These points are typically found at the tails of the distributions and can be identified visually by examining scatter plots and other graphs showing the distribution of the data (Aguinis et al., 2013). Once identified, there were several ways to go about handling these values that include (a) removing the outlier; (b) replacing the outlier value with the value of the nearest point; (c) keep the value and acknowledge its presence; and (d) modification, or manually changing the value to one that is less extreme (Aguinis et al., 2013). For the purposes of this study, outliers were kept and acknowledged because of sufficiency of the sample size.

Summary

This study examined the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong American students in higher education, as well as the differences between the males and females in this population in regard to their experiences with the two variables. In conclusion, based on the nature of the research questions, the variables of interest, and the target population, the use of a correlation matrix in the first part of the study and a MANOVA in the second were the most appropriate methodological approach for addressing the two research questions. This approach used an efficient and effective approach to acquiring, analyzing, and interpreting the data. In addition, this approach also fell within ethical boundaries in terms of providing participants with an awareness of the focus of the study and their rights as participants.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the collected data, its analysis, and the findings of the study. The chapter will begin by discussing data cleaning and how each of the instruments were calculated and scored in SPSS. This will be followed by a presentation of the descriptive results and a determination of whether the assumptions were met for the statistical analyses that were used in this study, which included the (a) Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, for the correlation matrices that was used to determine the correlation between the subscales and dimensions of the two instruments and the (b) MANOVA to determine whether any significant differences exist based on gender.

Once the data had been collected, it was organized into SPSS and calculated based on each instrument's specific procedures. The data was then cleaned to identify any missing values, outliers, incomplete surveys, surveys with multiple responses for a single question, and response bias. After the cleaning the data, some participants were omitted due to their method of responses on surveys, where they consistently responded to only one option through the entire survey. The final sample consisted of 97 participants. Following this, the correlation matrices and MANOVA were conducted to answer the research questions.

Instrument Calculation

The subscales of the REMS and dimensions of the UAS, and total scores of each of the instruments were calculated using SPSS, based on the scoring directions of the authors.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

To calculate the subscale score for each of the six subscales of the REMS, all of the items within each subscale were added and then divided the sum with the total number of items. Each of the subscales were calculated as follows: (a) *Assumptions of Inferiority* was calculated by adding questions 5, 9, 17, 21, 22, 32, 36, and 38 to obtain the sum, which was divided by 8 to obtain the score of this subscale; (b) *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* was calculated by adding questions 2, 6, 8, 11, 31, 34, and 40 to obtain the sum, which was divided by 7 to obtain the score of this subscale; (c) *Micro-Invalidations* was calculated by adding questions 4, 7, 10, 14, 26, 27, 30, 33, and 39, which was divided by 9 to obtain the score of this subscale; (d) *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* was calculated by adding questions 3, 13, 20, 23, 29, 35, 42, 43, and 45, which was divided by 9 to obtain the score of this subscale; (e) *Environmental Microaggressions* was calculated by adding questions 12, 18, 19, 24, 28, 37, and 41, which was divided by 7 to obtain the score of this subscale; and (f) *Workplace and School Microaggressions* was calculated by adding questions 1, 15, 16, 25, 44, which was divided by 5 to obtain the score of this subscale.

For the total score of the REMS, items 12, 18, 19, 24, 28, 37, and 41 for *Environmental Microaggressions* had to be inversely scored. This is done using the SPSS Transform->Recode into Different Variables function. After recoding those items, the scores for all 45 items were added, and then divided by 45 the sum of the total number of items, to obtain the total score of the scale.

University Alienation Scale

After the data was entered into SPSS for the UAS, some of the items were converted into inverse scores before the scoring calculations were conducted for each dimension. Similar to the procedure that used on the REMS, items 6, 8, 11, and 21 were recoded using the SPSS

Transform-> Recode into Different Variables function. Once these scores were recoded, each of the dimension scores were then calculated by adding the questions that are associated with the dimension.

The *Meaninglessness* dimension was calculated by adding questions 1, 5, 7, 12, 15, 16, 22, and 23. The *Powerlessness* dimension was calculated by adding questions 2, 3, 4, 9, 14, 18, 19, 29, and the inverted 11. Lastly, the *Social Estrangement* dimension was calculated by adding questions 10, 13, 17, 24, with the inverse scores for items 6, 8, and 21. The total score for this instrument was calculated by adding all the scores from the questions of the three dimensions.

Data Cleaning

After the instruments were scored, data cleaning procedures were conducted to address the concerns regarding the quality of the information that was collected. In all, there were four concerns that were addressed. These concerns included the problems of missing values, outliers, response bias, and incomplete surveys. Different procedures were used address each of these concerns.

To address the issue of missing values, frequency outputs were created for the REMS and UAS to identify any that were present. Based on the frequency outputs that were produced, there were several missing values that were discovered from each of the instruments. There was a total of nine missing values for the REMS and six for the UAS; a total of fifteen for both instruments. However, this concern was addressed by replacing the values with a series mean, or a mean of an entire series of data using SPSS Transform->Replace Missing Values.

Meanwhile, the check for outliers or extreme values was conducted by using box plots. This procedure required using SPSS Graphs->Legacy Dialogs->Boxplot to produce visuals for all of the subscales of both of the instruments. These outputs indicated that there was a total of

six outliers among three subscales. For the dimensions of the UAS, there was one outlier for *Powerlessness* and another for *Social Estrangement*. Meanwhile, for the REMS, there were four outliers for the subscales *Second Class Citizen and Assumptions of Inferiority*. Though these outliers remain a potential threat to the data set, the adequate sample size will minimize their impact (Kwak and Kim, 2005).

The final phase of the data cleaning process involved identifying response bias and surveys that were largely incomplete. For this process, a close observation of the data view on SPSS was conducted to identify any participants who responded to one option consistently throughout the surveys. For instance, although a participant adequately responded to all of the questions on the Demographic sheet but responded to the REMS and/or the UAS with a single answer such as a "0" for the REMS or a (1) for the UAS throughout the instrument, the participant would be omitted from the data set. After close observation, there was a total of one participant who responded to the surveys as described and was omitted from the set. No incomplete surveys were identified.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

The total number of participants completing the REMS was 97. Of these participants, about 34% (*n = 33*) reported experiences with *Assumptions of Interiority*, while 66% (*n = 67*) reported having no experiences with this type of racial microaggressions. Participants' scores for this subscale ranged from a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 7.13 (*M = 2.20; SD = 2.17*). For the second subscale, *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*, about 23% (*n = 22*) of participants reported having experiences with this type of racial microaggressions while 77% (*n = 75*) did not. Participants' scores for this subscale had a range of 6.14, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6.14 (*M = 1.24; SD = 1.53*). The third type of Racial Microaggressions,

Micro-Invalidations, had about 33% (*n = 32*) of participants reporting experiences with this type, while 67% (*n = 65*) reported no experiences. Participants' scores for subscale three had a range from 8.11, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 8.11 (*M = 2.48; SD = 2.46*). The fourth type, *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*, had 58% (*n = 56*) of participants reporting experiences with this type of racial microaggressions, while 42% (*n = 41*) reported no experiences. Participants' scores for this subscale had a range of 8.11, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 8.11 (*M = 4.53; SD = 2.54*). The fifth type, *Environmental Microaggressions*, had 41% (*n = 40*) of participants reporting experiences while 59% (*n = 57*) of participants had no experiences with this type. Participants' scores for this subscale with a range or 6.14, having a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6.14 (*M = 4.02; SD = 1.59*). Lastly, 34% (*n = 33*) of participants reported having experiences with *Workplace and School Microaggressions* while 66% (*n = 64*) of participants reported having no experiences with this type. Participants' scores for this subscale had a range of 4.20, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 4.20 (*M = 1.32; SD = 1.46*).

For internal reliability, a reliability test was conducted for the REMS. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the REMS in this study was (45 items; $\alpha = .78$). In addition, the item-total reliability values within acceptable levels.

Furthermore, an examination of the descriptive statistics for the subscales of the REMS revealed that five of the six subscales were skewed, where the *Assumptions of Inferiority* subscale was found to be positively skewed with a value .82, which was more than twice the standard error of .25, where this indicates a departure from normality (DeCarlo, 1999). For kurtosis, this value was less than twice the value of the standard error of .49 so it remains within the acceptable range of normality and was not a problem with this subscale. Subscale two,

Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, was found to be heavily affected by skewness with a value of 1.43, and kurtosis with a value of -.38, which were both twice their respective standard errors. Subscale three, *Micro-Invalidations*, was found to have problem with skewness with a value of .76, which is twice its standard error. However, this subscale did not have a problem with kurtosis with a value of -.58, not exceeding twice its standard error. Subscale four, *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*, was found to not have a problem with skewness with a value -.35, which was less than twice the standard error. With kurtosis, this subscale did have a problem in this area with a value of -1.21, which was twice the size of its standard error. Subscale five, *Environmental Microaggressions* was found to have a problem with skewness with a value of -.55, which was twice the size of the standard error but did not have a problem with kurtosis with a value of -.59, which was less than twice the standard error. Lastly, subscale six, *Workplace and School Microaggressions* was found to have problems with skewness with a value of .70, which is twice the standard error. This subscale did not have a problem with kurtosis with a value of -.92, which was less than twice the standard error.

To further identify problems with normality, several additional steps were taken. These steps included conducting normality tests using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk tests, and the use of boxplots and stem and leaf plots for each subscale. First, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk tests were conducted for each of the subscales. These two tests were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between each of the subscales and a normal distribution. Both tests were conducted simultaneously using SPSS Analyze->Descriptive Statistics->Explore. After running the tests, it was revealed that all of the subscales were significantly different than a normal distribution, which is an indication of the existence of problems with skewness.

Next, boxplots and stem and leaf plots provided a visual of potential outliers and extreme values for each subscale. The boxplots and stem and leaf plots did not reveal any outliers/extreme values for subscales one, three, four, five, and six. Only one of the six subscales were found to have outliers/extreme values. Subscale two, *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*, was shown to have outliers by boxplot, numbering 94, 95, 96, and 97. The stem and leaf plot revealed four extreme values at 75, 80, 93, and 97. These tests confirmed that the scores for each of the subscales indicated the presence of skewness and kurtosis, as well as outliers. However, kurtosis and skewness, as well as the outliers that were found in the sample population is not a concern due to a sufficient sample size as indicated by the central limit theorem where as a sample population increases, approximation of normality improves where these subscales decrease in influence the overall distribution as the sample size increases (Kwak & Kim, 2005).

University Alienation Scale

For the UAS, the number of participants completing the survey was 97. These participants rated the degree to which they agreed with each of the statements in the instrument. The scale ranged from 1 through 5, with 1 for "Strongly Disagree," 2 for "Disagree," 3 for "Uncertain," 4 for "Agree," and 5 for "Strongly Agree" for all three dimensions. For the first dimension of alienation, *Meaninglessness*, the average ratings were reported as follows; 1% (*n = 1*) of participants selected "Strongly Disagree," 22% (*n = 21*) selected "Disagree," 23% (*n = 22*) selected "Uncertain," 39% (*n = 38*) selected "Agree," and 16% (*n = 15*) selected "Strongly Agree," for the statements. The second dimension of alienation, *Powerlessness*, had 3% (*n = 3*) of participants selecting "Strongly Disagree," 24% (*n = 23*) with "Disagree," 38% (*n = 37*) with "Uncertain," 29% (*n = 28*) with "Agree," and 6% (*n = 6*) who selected "Strongly Agree."

Lastly, the third dimension of alienation, *Social Estrangement*, had 12% (*n = 12*) of participants selecting "Strongly Disagree," 33% (*n = 32*) with "Disagree," 12% (*n = 12*) with "Uncertain," 29% (*n = 28*) with "Agree," and 13% (*n = 13*) who selected "Strongly Agree."

Furthermore, the range, minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of each of the dimensions were identified using a SPSS Descriptive Statistics frequency output. The findings were reported as follows. For the *Meaninglessness* dimension, the range was 26 with a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 38 (*M = 25.51, SD = 5.43*). The *Powerlessness* dimension was found to have a range of 32, with a minimum of 11 and a maximum of 43 (*M = 27.87, SD = 5.70*). Lastly, the *Social Estrangement* dimension had a range of 20, with a minimum of 11 and a maximum of 31 (*M = 21.14, SD = 3.73*).

For internal reliability, a reliability test was conducted for the UAS. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the UAS in this study was (24 items; $\alpha = .74$). In addition, the item-total reliability values within acceptable levels.

Each of the dimensions were closely examined for any indications of skewness and kurtosis. This process involved using SPSS's descriptive frequency output. The first dimension, *Meaninglessness*, reported skewness at -.25, with a standard error of .25. The skewness was found to be less than twice the standard error, which indicated that this dimension did not have a problem with it. Similarly, the kurtosis value was reported to be -.36 with a standard error of .49. Since the kurtosis level was found to be less than twice the standard error, it is not a problem for this dimension. (Cisar and Cisar, 2010). The second dimension, *Powerlessness*, and third dimension, *Social Estrangement*, also reported skewness and kurtosis levels that were less than twice their standard errors with *Powerlessness* reporting .11 for skewness, .25 for kurtosis, and a

standard error of .49; and with *Social Estrangement* reporting .05 for skewness with a standard error of .25, and .03 for kurtosis with a standard error of .49.

To further verify that skewness and kurtosis were not an issue, boxplots and stem and leaf plots in SPSS were used to identify potential outliers that may impact the normality of each of the dimensions. After producing the boxplots, the *Meaninglessness* dimension was found to have no outliers. However, *Powerlessness* and *Social Estrangement* were found to have one for each of them. The boxplot for *Powerlessness* revealed that there was one outlier, numbering 92, whereas the one for *Social Estrangement* revealed that there was also one outlier, numbering 81 for this dimension. Although these two outliers were revealed from the boxplots, they appear to not have any substantial impact on the normality of these dimensions. Visually, each of the dimensions reflected a normal distribution and as indicated earlier, the skewness and kurtosis values were all less than twice the standard error. Therefore, it was unnecessary to omit the outliers and/or make any adjustments to the data set to reflect the acceptable values of normality (Cisar and Cisar, 2010).

Assumptions of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

There are several assumptions that needed to be met for Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. These assumptions included the absence of outliers, normality of the distribution, linearity and homoscedasticity. For the first assumption, outliers, boxplots and stem and leaf Plots were used to provide a visual of potential outliers and extreme values for each of the subscales and dimensions of the instruments. For the REMS, the boxplots and stem and leaf plots did not reveal any outliers/extreme values for subscales one, *Assumptions of Inferiority*; three, *Micro-Invalidations*; four, *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*; five, *Environmental Microaggression*s; and six, *Workplace and School Microaggressions*. Only one

of the six subscales were found to have outliers/extreme values. Subscale two, *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*, was shown to have outliers by boxplot, numbering 94, 95, 96, and 97. The stem and leaf plot revealed four extreme values at 75, 80, 93, and 97.

For the UAS, the *Meaninglessness* dimension was found to have no outliers. However, *Powerlessness* and *Social Estrangement* were found to have one outlier each. The boxplot for *Powerlessness* revealed that there was one outlier, numbering 92, whereas the one for *Social Estrangement* revealed that there was also one outlier, numbering 81 for this dimension. Although these two outliers were revealed from the boxplots, they appear to not have any substantial impact on the normality of these dimensions. Visually, each of the subscales reflected a normal distribution and as indicated earlier, the skewness and kurtosis values were all less than twice the standard error. Therefore, it was unnecessary to omit the outliers and/or make any adjustments to the data set to reflect the acceptable values of normality (Cisar and Cisar, 2010).

For the second assumption, the test for normality of the subscales and dimensions of the instruments, both instruments were tested using the Shapiro Wilk statistics through the SPSS function of Analyze->Descriptive Statistics->Explore and then selecting the tests of normality option in the "Plots" tab. For the REMS, the outputs revealed that the Shapiro Wilks statistics for each of the six subscales were all statistically significant, meaning that the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a statistical difference across the groups and that all of the six subscales for the REMS met the expectation for normality.

Meanwhile, for the UAS all three dimensions were found to be non-statistically significant, and therefore rejecting the alternative hypothesis that suggested differences across the groups. The UAS met the expectation of this assumption with the dimension

Meaninglessness having a P value of .29; *Powerlessness* with .58; and *Social Estrangement* with .56.

The third assumption, linearity and homoscedasticity, both instruments were tested visually, by observing the patterns of the points two dimensions on scatterplots. This was conducted through SPSS's function of Analyze->Regression->Linear where dimensions of alienation, *Powerlessness*, *Meaninglessness*, and *Social Estrangement* were placed into the "Dependent" box and where Gender was placed into the "Independent(s)" box. Furthermore, by clicking the "Plots" tab, "DEPENDNT" was selected for the Y-intersection box, and "ZRESID" for the X-intersection box. The scatter plots were all consistent with their points forming a straight line from the bottom left of the graph to the top right, indicating homoscedasticity. In addition, Levene's test for both instruments as shown in Tables 9 and 10, were not statistically significant with an $F(1, 95) = .69$, $p = .41$ for the REMS; and $F(1, 95) = 1.68$, $p = .19$ for the UAS, indicating that this assumption for the equality of variances was met.

Assumptions of the Multivariate Analysis of Variance

The use of the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) required meeting several assumptions that included having (a) a normal distribution, (b) linearity, (c) homogeneity of variances, (d) homogeneity of covariance (French, Macedo, Poulsen, Waterson, and Yu, 2008). For the first expectation of having a normal distribution, the REMS had higher levels of skewness and kurtosis exhibited by each of the subscales; while the UAS, was able to meet this expectation successfully. However, with the consideration of the uniqueness of the sample population and the sufficient sample size (N) that was obtained, the failure of the REMS to meet this expectation was not a concern because the skewed distribution does not influence the overall distribution as the sample size increases (Kwak and Kim, 2005).

To determine if the sample met the Linearity assumption, scatterplots used for each of the subscales and dimensions of both instruments were used to provide a visual of the patterns of the responses. The scatterplots for all of the subscales were relatively consistent from the lower left to upper right of the boxes. None of the scatterplots showed signs of any curvilinear patterns, which would indicate that a linear relationship only exists to a certain extent, and that the relationship is not linear. This is an indication that this expectation was met (Cao, Song, & Tay, 2017).

To determine if the sample met the homogeneity of variances assumption, Levene's test was conducted through SPSS. This test was shown to not be significant for both instruments, which indicated that this expectation was met. The Levene statistics for both instruments were not statistically significant with $F(1, 95) = .70$, $p = .41$ for the REMS; and $F(1, 95) = 1.68$, $p = .20$ for the UAS.

Lastly, as for the assumption of Homogeneity of Covariance, a Box Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices was conducted for the subscales of the REMS and dimensions of the UAS. The results of this test produced the following results $F(21, 20089.66) = 34.99$, $p = .05$ for the REMS and $F(6, 35596.36) = 3.13$, $p = .81$ for the UAS, which indicated an equal covariance matrices, which means that this expectation was met.

In addition to the assumptions for the MANOVA, a check for multicollinearity was also conducted to determine if any of the subscales and dimensions were too highly correlated. To examine the issue of multicollinearity, collinearity statistics were produced to identify VIF levels for each of the subscales and dimensions. From this test, all the VIF levels did not exceed 4.0 or fall under .2, which indicated that there were no problems with multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010). Of the subscales for the REMS, the following VIF values were reported for their

respective subscale; 2.65 was reported for *Assumptions of Inferiority*; 1.86 for *Second Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*; 2.038 for *Micro-Invalidations*; 1.82 for *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*; 1.07 for *Environmental Microaggressions*; and 2.06 for *Workplace and School Racial Microaggressions*. As for the dimensions of the UAS, the following VIF values for their respective dimensions were; 1.21 was reported for *Meaninglessness;* 1.12 for *Powerlessness*; and 1.12 for *Social Estrangement*. Therefore, based on the range of the VIF values that were identified for each of the subscales and dimensions, no issues with multicollinearity were detected.

Analysis for Research Questions

Research Question 1

Research question one (RQ1) of this study examined the relationship between the six subscales of racial microaggressions and the three dimensions of alienation:

1. What is the relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education?

The null and alternative hypotheses for research question one RQ1 are stated below:

H0: There is no significant relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education.

H1: There is a significant relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education.

To examine the relationship between the two instruments, a correlation matrix from a descriptive correlational design was used to determine the relationships between all subscales and dimensions. The six subscales of the REMS and the three dimensions of the UAS were included in the variables box with the Pearson box selected for the type of correlation coefficient, two-tailed for test of significance, and the flag significant correlations option selected.

The results of the correlation matrix as shown in Table 8 indicated that five of the six subscales of the REMS were statistically significantly correlated with two of the three dimensions of the UAS. Specifically, the analysis indicated that the first dimension of the UAS, *Meaninglessness* was significantly correlated with all of the subscales of the REMS: *Meaninglessness* and *Assumptions of Inferiority* were significantly correlated, $r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$; *Meaninglessness* and *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* were significantly correlated, $r(95) = .24$, $p = .02$; *Meaninglessness* and *Micro-Invalidations* were significantly correlated $r(95) = .34$, $p = < .05$; *Meaninglessness* and *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* were significantly correlated, $r(95) = .33$, $p < .05$, and *Meaninglessness* and *Workplace and School Microaggressions* were significantly correlated, $r(95) = .36$, $p < .05$. However, the two dimensions of *Meaninglessness* and *Environmental Microaggressions* were not significantly correlated, $r(95) = -.01$, $p = .92$.

The analysis also indicated that the second dimension of the UAS, *Powerlessness*, was also correlated with five of the six subscales of the REMS (Table 8). Such that, *Powerlessness* and *Assumptions of Inferiority* were significantly correlated $r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$; *Powerlessness* and *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* were significantly correlated, $r(95) = .25$, $p < .05$; *Powerlessness* and *Micro-Invalidations* were significantly correlated, $r(95) = .37$, $p < .05$; *Powerlessness* and *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* were significantly

correlated, r(95) = .32, p < .05; and *Powerlessness* and *Workplace and School Microaggressions* were significantly correlated, r(95) = .39, p < .05. However, *Powerlessness* and *Environmental Microaggressions* were not significantly correlated, r(95) = .05, p = .65.

Meanwhile, as indicated in Table 8, the third dimension of the UAS *Social Estrangement* was not significantly correlated with the any of the subscales of the REMS: *Social Estrangement* and *Assumptions of Inferiority* were not significantly correlated, r(95) = .03, p = .78; *Social Estrangement* and *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* were not significantly correlated, r(95) = .16, p = .11; *Social Estrangement* and *Micro-Invalidations* were not significantly correlated, r(95) = .05, p = .65; *Social Estrangement* and *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* were not significantly correlated, r(95) = -.03, p = .74; *Social Estrangement* and *Environmental Microaggressions* were not significantly, r(95) = .16, p = .11; and *Social Estrangement* and *Workplace and School Microaggressions* were not significantly correlated. r(95) = .08, p = .45.

Based on the results of the analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis below was accepted:

> H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between racial microaggressions as measured by REMS Subscales and alienation as measured by the UAS dimensions among Hmong American students in higher education.

Research Question 2

Research question two (RQ2) of this study examined the difference of the experiences of racial microaggressions and alienation between the male and female participants of the sample:

Is there a difference between Hmong college student males' and females' reported experiences of alienation, as measured by the composite of UAS, and racial microaggressions, as measured by the composite REMS?

For RQ2, the null and alternative hypothesis are stated below:

H0: There is no statistically significant difference between Hmong college student males' and females' reported experiences of the composite of alienation, as measured by the UAS, and racial microaggressions, as measured by the composite REMS.

H1: There is a statistically significant difference between Hmong college student males' and females' reported experiences of the composite of alienation, as measured by the UAS, and racial microaggressions, as measured by the composite REMS.

To examine the differences between males and females on alienation and racial microaggressions, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used in a between-group design with the composite score of the REMS and the composite score of the UAS were included in the dependent variables box; while gender was the independent variable. The significance level for the analysis was set to. 05. The analysis indicated that there was no statistical difference between the males and females in this sample in regard to comparing the differences between the total scores of alienation and racial microaggressions, $F(1, 95) = .87$, $p = .42$; Wilk's $\Lambda = .98$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$; where the partial Eta squared value of .02, this is an indication that about .02% of the variability of experiences across the REMS and UAS are accounted by the two group levels, or gender.

The output produced several boxes, which included the following: Between-Subjects Factors, Multivariate Tests, Descriptive Statistics, Box's Test of Equality of Covariances, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance, and Tests of Between Subjects Effects. The

Descriptive Statistics reported that the sample size consisted of 37% (*n = 36*) males and 63% (*n = 61*) females, totaling 97 participants.

Summary

Chapter four presented the analysis used to answer the research questions posed by this study. The first section included information about the descriptive statistics, the data cleaning in preparation for the actual analysis. This section also explained how the assumptions for each of the statistical tests were tested. The second section provided the summary of the results for each of the research questions.

The analysis for research question one (RQ1) indicated that five of the types of racial microaggression, *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*, *Micro-Invalidations*, *Assumptions of Inferiority*, *Second Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*, and *Workplace and School Microaggressions*, were significantly related to two dimensions of alienation, which were *Powerlessness* and *Meaninglessness.*

For research question two, (RQ2), the results of the MANOVA indicated that there were no significant gender differences in the experience of racial microaggressions or alienation, as measured by the total scores of the REMS and UAS.

The next chapter will summarize the findings of the study and explain them in greater depth. It will also discuss the implications for professionals in higher education, as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

Chapter five includes a summary of the findings of the study, the interpretation of the results, implications for professionals in higher education, the limitations of the study, and the recommendations for future research. As mentioned in chapter one, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between Hmong college students' experiences with racial microaggressions add alienation. In addition, it also explored gender differences in the experience of racial microaggressions and alienation between the male and female Hmong college students.

Summary of the Findings

The result of the analysis for RQ1 that examined the relationship between the types of racial microaggressions and the dimensions of alienation indicated that there were significant correlations between *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*, *Micro-Invalidations*, *Assumptions of Inferiority*, *Workplace and School Racial Microaggressions*, and *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* with all subscales of the REMS and two of the subscales of UAS, *Powerlessness* and *Meaninglessness*. The most significant correlations were present for *Powerlessness* and *Micro-Invalidations* had ($r(95) = .37$, $p < .05$), *Meaninglessness* and *Workplace and School Microaggressions* ($r(95) = .36$, $p < .05$); *Meaninglessness* and *Micro-Invalidations* ($r(95) = .34$, $p < .05$); *Meaninglessness* and *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* ($r(95) = .33$, $p < .05$); *Powerlessness* and *Workplace and School Microaggressions* ($r(95) = .33$, $p < .05$); *Meaninglessness* and *Assumptions of Inferiority* ($r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$); *Powerlessness* and *Assumptions of Inferiority* ($r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$); *Powerlessness* and

Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity ($r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$); *Powerlessness* and *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* ($r(95) = .25$, $p < .05$); and *Meaninglessness* and *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* ($r(95) = .24$, $p < .05$).

Meanwhile, RQ2 that examined whether differences between the composite scores of the UAS and REMS existed based on gender, results indicated no statistical differences between men and women, $F(1, 95) = .87$, $p = .42$; Wilk's $\Lambda = .98$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Based on the analysis, gender accounted for about 2 percent of the variability of experiences with racial microaggressions and alienation.

Discussion of Findings

As one of the first studies to examine the relationship between the experience of racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong Americans college students**,** the findings in this study highlight some important issues for professionals in higher education. For instance, this study revealed significant relationships between racial *Powerlessness* and *Micro-Invalidations* ($r(95) = .37$, $p < .05$). A possible explanation for this finding is that the ethnic identities of Hmong American students are repetitively being invalidated because of the notion that API's are the same. For example, Hmong American students are likely to have experienced situations where they may have been mistaken for another API student by their peers and instructors, and often lumped under the "Asian" category where they are misrepresented. This is reflective of the process of ethnogenesis or racialization of API's since their arrival to the United States (Kibria, 2002). These incidences and the overall process of racialization could explain the feelings of *Powerlessness*, that Hmong American students experience as they may feel unable to change their situation. For Hmong American students, the lack of representation of professionals of their ethnicity on-campus can impact them in such a way that they might feel that there is little hope

of receiving support even if they reach out. This lack of representation can potentially contribute to their reported experience of powerlessness.

Meanwhile, it is possible that the relationship between *Meaninglessness* and *Micro-Invalidations* ($r(95) = .34$, $p = < .05$) can be explained by the lack of connection that Hmong students have within classrooms, programs, and by peers. For example, Hmong American students may have difficulty relating to the content, which can often be presented from a Euro-centric perspective where there is little or no focus on Hmong American students and their communities. Even within diversity focused courses, emphasis on the Hmong community may be limited and/or partial. As for programs that are designed to engage students, Hmong American students might find themselves participating in activities that have no emphasis on who they are as ethnic individuals, where they may interact with other students and professionals who might overlook their ethnicity and view them simply as an API as indicated by the stereotype that all Asians are the same (Nadal et al., 2012). Lastly, Hmong American students may find themselves confused when they report an incident of racism and are told that they are exaggerating, making something out of nothing, and are essentially not believed. Micro-invalidations may be a part of the Hmong American student experience in higher education as there is little emphasis on the racial experiences of APIs in general (Lee & Zhou, 2004; Choi, 2011). Hmong American students may wonder why no one believes and/or values them, leaving them feeling confused and a with sense of meaninglessness, which may intensify as the disconnect between Hmong students and the campus environment increases.

Another significant finding in this study, was the relationship between *Powerlessness* and the *Workplace and School Microaggressions subscale* ($r(95) = .39$, $p < .05$). This study revealed that Hmong American students' experiences with being treated differently on campus was

related to their race, and these experiences were significantly correlated with feelings of *Powerlessness*. Experiencing microaggressions in the workplace and at school were related to Hmong American students feeling powerlessness due to their perception that they are not able to change their situation at school because they do not have the authority to do anything about their circumstances or that there is no one who can or will advocate for them. As indicated by Chan and Mendoza-Denton (2008), API students anticipated rejection because of their racial identity, which is something that Hmong American students may anticipate as well. Additionally, because of the limited number of role models in positions of authority in higher education, Hmong American students do not have opportunities to share their concerns with individuals who they believe can effectively advocate for them. The sense of powerlessness may also be exacerbated by the historical context of the Hmong population as a minority group throughout recorded history (Quincy,1988) where they might have been in similar situations with limited numbers of Hmong in positions of authority who they could go to for support.

With regard to the relationship between *Meaninglessness* and the *Workplace and School Microaggressions subscale* ($r(95) = .36$, $p < .05$), this relationship could be potentially explained by the inconsistent messaging of diversity and inclusion in the college setting, where the message about supporting diversity is not always evident. For example, an institution may promote the notion of being inclusive and accepting of others, however, they may not practice their message in the recruitment of students and professionals of color, and the treatment of individuals in classrooms (Solorzano, et al., 2000). This inconsistency may leave Hmong American students confused and wondering about whether the institution is genuinely committed to these efforts. In addition to the confusion of messaging, Hmong American students may also be taught from a western lens where they may have difficulty in finding meaning and relating to

the content. For example, Hmong American students may learn about American history and rarely come across the topic of the Hmong community during America's involvement in the secret war in Laos or are provided with a limited summary of the events. This lack of relevance in the curriculum content could further create confusion as some Hmong American students may feel that their community played a significant role in part of American history, leaving them with a sense that the contribution was not valued.

In addition, Hmong American students may also find themselves feeling even less valued as if their community does not matter when courses related to racial/ethnic diversity have little focus on APIs. Regardless of the setting, meaninglessness can affect motivation, leaving Hmong American students in a place of deciding whether they want to continue attending certain classes or even staying enrolled in higher education. Furthermore, Hmong American students may also extrapolate their experiences within the classroom to the rest of the college setting where they may not be involved with campus activities, nor seek help when needed due to the anticipation of rejection as reported by Chan and Mendoza-Denton (2008). Consequently, meaninglessness can have a range of negative effects to Hmong American students that can be harmful to their academic performance.

Another significant finding of the study was the relationship between *Powerlessness* and *Assumptions of Inferiority* ($r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$). Hmong American students' experiences of being perceived as inferior to others were significantly related to feelings of *Powerlessness*. This finding could be explained by the historical status of the Hmong community as a minority group in the countries they have resided in (Quincy, 1988). As a minority group within the countries that they have resided, there is potential for this to have vicarious consequences as older generation members of the Hmong community share their knowledge through story telling from

one generation to another. Hmong American students may be taught about their history by parents and grandparents who had experiences living in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and China before and after the Vietnam War, where they may have lacked access to education and support by these governments, and where they may have also been mistreated to various degrees. These stories as well as the repetitive nature in which they have likely been shared with Hmong American students may have created a grim perspective of who they are as an ethnic group. In addition to having direct experiences with various forms of racism, storytelling may further reinforce the idea of a grimmer reality. Hmong people may be more susceptible to feeling inferior, being treated as a second-class citizen, or even perceived as a criminal because of this history.

Assumptions of Inferiority was also found to be significantly related to *Meaninglessness* ($r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$), indicating that Hmong American students' experiences with being perceived as inferior were largely associated with feelings of meaninglessness. This relationship could potentially be explained by the inconsistency of the messaging around APIs for Hmong American students. Though APIs are often viewed as the model minority (Peterson, 1966), it is possible that Hmong American students may have received messages that contradict this view. Hmong American students may come to learn that they are not included under the model minority as they compare this idea with their lived experiences. Moreover, their peers and instructors who have worked with the Hmong community may also convey messages that would further confirm their incompatibility with the idea of the model minority. As revealed in this study, some Hmong American students indicated that they had lived experiences where people assumed that they grew up in a particular neighborhood or were poor among based upon their identity, which is largely inconsistent with the idea of the well-to-do model minority. These

encounters might confuse Hmong American students, especially those from more affluent backgrounds who may not identify as being poor and/or struggling, which can lead to feelings of meaninglessness.

Moreover, another significant relationship that was revealed from this study was between *Powerlessness* and *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* ($r(95) = .25$, $p < .05$). This finding is an indication that Hmong American students' experiences with being viewed as a second-class citizen and/or associated with criminality, are directly associated with feelings of powerlessness. The Hmong American students in this study indicated that they experienced avoidance of eye contact, challenges with seating in public spaces, and received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other groups. Consistent with other studies, these experiences can also occur in the classroom where other students might avoid sitting next to Hmong American students and where instructors ignore them and discount their ideas (Solorzano et al., 2000). As with the African American students in Fissoris' (2010) study, Hmong American students may also feel that nothing will change, and that the learning environments were intended to serve other groups, but not them. Hmong American students may find this to be especially true with the lack of representation of Hmong professionals and the general lack of awareness of APIs, which can lead to feelings of losing control of ones' environment and powerlessness. Fissoris' (2010) found that African American students often feel underserved and hoped for something better, they were also realistic about their situation and did not expect things to change.

In addition to *Powerlessness*, *Meaninglessness* was also found to be significantly related to *Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality* ($r(95) = .24$, $p = .02$). It is possible that this is related to the pattern of treatment towards populations of color in larger society as

described by Feagan (1992) “The sites of racial discrimination range from relatively protected home sites, to the even less protected workplace and educational sites, to the even less protected public places,” which continues to be the experiences of APIs today in higher education as indicated by Harvard University’s discriminatory practices against API students and their admission into that institution (Schmidt, 2015). In addition to the general pattern of treatment, there is also a general lack of racial sensitivity towards APIs as indicated by the Black-White binary nature of the race in the United States, as well as public incidences like ESPN’s usage of the “Chink in the Armor” headline for a piece on Asian American basketball player Jeremy Lin in 2012, and with Rep. Bettie Cook Scotts’ usage of “ching chong” to describe Rep. Stephanie Chang during a state Senate primary in 2018. The racial experiences and insensitivity towards API communities at large can overshadow the initial reasons that brought Hmong American students to these higher education institutions where they may begin losing a sense of purpose and experience meaninglessness.

Meanwhile, the relationship between *Powerlessness* and *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* ($r(95) = .32$, $p < .05$) could possibly be explained by the history of racialization of API’s in the United States. As Hmong American students are lumped into the broad “Asian” racial category, they experience some of the challenges that come with this affiliation such as the recent situation with Harvard’s’ systematic discrimination against Asian-American applicants (Schmidt, 2015), and where some programs and scholarships restrict API students from receiving benefits due to their racial identity. Through the assumption that all Asians are the same, Hmong American students may be restricted from certain institutions, programs, and resources that can provide them with the support needed to be successful in the higher education setting. However,

they remain powerless to make any substantial changes to their situation as consequences like these continue to impact their experiences in higher education.

Another possible explanation for this finding could be related to the notion that perhaps Hmong American students' have experienced this type of racial microaggression so frequently and without much support from their institutions' administration that they feel powerlessness to change their situation. Additionally, the Hmong American students may have learned from prior experiences that their call for support may be ignored. For those who have sought support, they might have been told that they were too sensitive, making the problem bigger than it is, and/or misperceiving the incident. However, as indicated by Wang, Leu, and Shoda (2011), racial experiences for API students are a sensitive topic where they experience a greater sense of emotional intensity when interpreting potential cases of racial microaggressions. Conversations about these incidences can evoke feelings of anger, resentment, frustration, and contempt (Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011), which can further increase feelings of powerlessness within the higher education setting.

Arguably, the racial experiences of API's have largely revolved around *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity*, or the notion that all API's are all the same in terms of looks, ethnicity, cultural values, behaviors, and the way they eat and talk. The idea that API's are the same is common and as noted by Nadal and his colleagues (2012), where some White Americans were not even aware that the Philippines is a country. For example, during classes and/or with peers outside of class, Hmong American students may be asked to speak for all Asians, or to describe a homeland that they never visited. These interactions can create further disconnect and discomfort, which may deter the student from wanting to be in the classroom or with the usual peers they hang around with. Furthermore, several stereotypes are directly associated with

Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity where these stereotypes range from suggestive views that API's are the model minority and that they are taking over the job markets in certain professional fields (Toupin & Son, 1991). Peers in the classroom may intentionally avoid API or Hmong American students because of intimidation and/or the fear of competition. This can also lead to further isolation for students who may be racially categorized as Asian, leaving them to feel a loss of power or control of their situation in those environments.

This homogenous view of APIs in the United States has created various degrees of hostility towards members of this racial group across different times and settings. Examples of this include the murder of Vincent Chin in 1982, a Chinese man who was mistaken for being Japanese and beaten to death by two White men. Within college settings, hostility towards API students come in the form of racial microaggressions and institutional racism, where they experience being assumed to be the same as others in their racial group, have their experiences and ideas invalidated, are not treated as well as the other students, and are systematically rejected by some institutions, among other things (Nadal, 2013; Schmidt, 2015).

Relatedly, the relationship between *Meaninglessness* and *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity* ($r(95) = .33$, $p < .05$) was also found to be significant for Hmong American students in this study and can potentially be explained by the confusion that can be created from the inconsistent messages and different assumptions from their peers and instructors. For example, participants indicated through the REMS that others (a) had assumed that they spoke another language besides English, (b) wanted to date them because of their race, (c) were not believed when they said that they were born in the United States, and (d) were told that all people in their racial group are all the same, among other things. As evident by the nature of these experiences, Hmong American students may feel confused in addition to anger, frustration, and even denial.

Similar with what Sue et al., (2007) found, where APIs go through a process of determining whether a racial microaggression had actually occurred, as well as how they should feel and respond regarding the experience. Furthermore, Sue et al., indicated that at times, APIs also go through a process of making excuses for the racist comments or jokes made by friends, leaving them rationalizing or denying the reality of their experiences. Similarly, Hmong American students may also go through these processes and experience frustration and meaninglessness.

While the study found several significant relationships between the experience of certain types of microaggression and alienation, it found that the *Social Estrangement subscale* of the UAS were not significantly correlated with any of the subscales of the REMS. A possible reason for this finding is that the racial microaggressions that were experienced by Hmong American students were likely to be mitigated by the micro-ethnic enclaves as mentioned earlier, which can help provide a variety of opportunities for them to be engaged, to interact with others like them, and to make friends. Despite the lack of representation of Hmong American professionals across campus among faculty and administration, and the likelihood that Hmong American students find themselves alone in predominantly White classrooms, they have a community that is readily available for them before and after classes for support. This offers them a sense of belonging where they have a physical location to meet, a support system to fall back on, and an opportunity to be themselves culturally whether that is speaking Hmong, sharing cultural foods, and having conversations about culturally relevant topics. These support systems move beyond the boundaries of student organizations and could be described as micro-ethnic enclaves, resembling that of the ethnic enclaves of their community outside of these two campuses. Like student organizations, these student communities are organized into different groups that have slightly different purposes and goals yet are all aimed to support each other. However, what is different

is how the students move beyond their respective organizations to support all the Hmong organizations and/or related groups to support their community on campus. As with ethnic enclaves, these students have established a community on campus that have (a) a physical location, typically in the form of a space in their student union; (b) community members that are of the same ethnic group with similar values, culture, and language; (c) opportunities for engagement and support, whether academically, culturally, socially, or psychologically; (d) a system for trading labor, whether in group or across different organizations; (e) a flow of resources from student fees, fundraising, and grant writing; and (f) a system of checks and balances by their organizations. This community has served Hmong American students as a system of support that has helped alleviated their experiences with environmental microaggressions and social estrangement.

For environmental microaggressions, although Sue et al., (2007) may be accurate in their statement about how API's have less representation in the social sphere, these experiences could have potentially mitigated by the sample of Hmong American students in this study with a consistent and centralized community that provided these students with a greater sense of belonging and support. Hmong American students on these campuses have their identities consistently reinforced and supported through engagement with each other to the extent that the lack of representation on the broader campus is countered with a consistent form of representation within these micro-enclaves. Their day-to-day experiences consist of interacting with Hmong peers who likely shape the environment to be more familiar.

A potential explanation for the lack of significance of environmental microaggressions and social estrangement could be related to the issue of segmented assimilation (Portes and Zhou, 1993). They suggested that due to the competitive nature of the United States, labor

market, not all immigrants are able to obtain desirable jobs and the support that they need to succeed. Whether this is based on a lack in education, skill set, or other desirable traits, these immigrants lean towards their enclaves where they have the cultural capital and an understanding in navigating their specific communities for opportunities. Hence, based on the view of segmented assimilation by Portes and Zhou (1993), ethnic enclaves can serve as a viable source of support for many immigrants who are not able to navigate the mainstream United States labor market as successfully as other groups.

Gender Differences

The study also investigated gender differences in the experience of racial microaggressions and alienation and found that there were no differences in the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among men and women. Both groups were as equally vulnerable to the different types of racial microaggressions and dimensions of alienation, which may likely be due to the probability that they experience racial microaggressions similarly, such as being perceived as a foreigner and/or the model minority among other stereotypes that are associated with APIs (Kibria, 2002). In fact, the sense of alienation that both groups experience is indicative of the impact that racial microaggressions have on the college experience of Hmong American students regarding finding support from authority figures in the college setting. It is also likely that they utilize and share the support system that students from their ethnic community have establish. As discussed earlier, it is likely that Hmong male and female students prefer seeking support from each other through these micro-ethnic enclaves. These are the locations where Hmong American students can feel safe to talk openly, be critical, and relate to each other with these racial experiences; in contrast to seeking mental health professionals for support who may come off as less genuinely interested in race-related concerns,

and more focused on finding ways to make the student feel supported without addressing the larger concern that is directly affecting the student.

However, this finding is somewhat surprising considering the differences in cultural expectations for Hmong men and women, and how these expectations have evolved over the last half-century. Traditionally, Hmong communities were patriarchal where Hmong men were the decision makers, breadwinners, and head of the household. In contrast, Hmong women spent most of their time performing chores at home, caring for grandparents, and raising children (Yang, 2004). This gradually changed after the Secret War in Laos, when many Hmong refugees came to the United States due to this event. Presently, although some restrictions still exist for Hmong women, it is becoming more common to see them pursuing the same opportunities as Hmong men in the United States. They are attending college, obtaining graduate degrees, and pursuing competitive careers. With having experiences at both ends of this continuum expectations, Hmong women have become resourceful and adaptable to difficult situations, possibly more so than Hmong men. This may explain the similarities in their experiences with racial microaggressions and alienation, where Hmong women have acquired sufficient levels of coping to manage these experiences in addition to the oppression that women generally experience daily.

Implications of Findings

The findings from this study have important implications for professionals in higher education, especially those who work in the area of College Counseling and Student Affairs, who are actively involved in student recruitment, retention, and mental health. These professionals may find that many of the challenges presented in this study are relatable to their own experiences in working with students of color. This section will provide some recommendations

for (a) how institutions can deal with racial microaggressions including addressing institutional racism; (b) creating an academic environment that supports Hmong America students' success; and (c) creating a campus environment that is inclusive and supports Hmong American students.

As institutions attempt to deal with racial microaggressions and address institutional racism, it is critical that these efforts begin with higher education administrators being committed to creating an environment that is supportive and inclusive of Hmong American students and professionals, as well as other student groups that are from historically marginalized and underrepresented populations. This commitment requires administrators to (a) take a firmer stance and being more proactive on promoting diversity and inclusion efforts across their institutions, (b) adequately address issues of racial microaggressions for students and professionals of color; and (c) avoid the generalization of racial groups by disaggregating data. The initiatives related to these three recommendations are discussed below.

With the first commitment, administrators need to be more proactive in the promotion of diversity, where they are taking a firmer stance on ensuring that all members of the campus community have a stake in this process. It is necessary that all students and professionals within an institution are held responsible for creating and/or maintaining a campus environment that is inclusive of individuals from all backgrounds. This will involve systematically requiring all members of a campus community to take part in diversity work across the institution based on a standard number of hours, committees, and/or activities that is defined through an evaluative process. In addition, there needs to be accountability for those who fail to meet these expectations to indicate the importance of their participation. For example, the amount and/or nature of contribution towards diversity and inclusion efforts need to be factored in when considering promotions of professionals, or a grant to an office, department, and/or organization

within the institution. This would create a recognition that diversity is a fundamental aspect of a higher education institution and encourage community members at all level to be more involved in these efforts, which is crucial for creating a truly equal and equitable environment. As other studies have indicated, the past approaches of having students and professionals of color be representatives, teachers, and the only sources of support available for individuals of color within an institution has been shown to be harmful, to the extent that these individuals have experienced exhaustion and battle fatigue (Franklin et al., 2014; Smith, et al., 2011; Yosso, Smith, & Ceja, 2009). Therefore, as a shared space, it would make sense if no one, regardless of their accomplishments or prestige can be exempted from involvement with these efforts.

In addition to having more involvement, administrators in higher education also need a firmer response to students' reported incidences of racial microaggressions. As of now, students continue to experience these subtle forms of racism across college campuses without an effective and/or systematic approach to addressing their concerns. Students can go to professors and other professionals and/or office on campus to report their concerns, however, without direct evidence due to the nature of racial microaggressions, they can be left feeling frustrated and hopeless as indicated by Fissori (2010) where African American students did not expect their learning environments to change. Part of this challenge is related to the lack of understanding of the current forms of racism due to inadequate training and pace of change that is necessary within higher education institutions. While higher education professionals continue to expect to confront old forms of racism, racial microaggressions continue to impact students of colors in classrooms and other places across campus. With this understanding, the first step is for higher education institutions to update their definitions of racism to include the different categories of racial microaggressions presented in this study. This will allow higher education professionals to

identify and develop appropriate responses. Furthermore, because not all racial microaggressions are intentional, individuals engaging in these acts should be required to complete a certain number of hours of diversity training for increasing awareness.

Furthermore, regarding the problem with the generalization of Asian Americans, and other groups, administrators in higher education need to disaggregate demographic data. Higher education institutions need to begin seeing Hmong American students and other students of color as groups with unique experiences to provide appropriate support and more relevant interventions. In addition, professionals should avoid creating broad categories to organize students in such a way that they are misrepresented. For example, misrepresentations often began even before Hmong American students step foot on campus. When they apply for college, the admissions process only allows them to select from a few options to identify themselves, which is based on race. Despite the diversity that exist within the Asian racial category, they can only select "Asian" which systematically lumps them with other API ethnic groups. Moving beyond race, information about students should be further broken down to their ethnicities to gain more insight about students' backgrounds. The use of ethnicity in demographic information can provide valuable information about important differences within a racial category. In the case of Hmong American students, ethnicity will reveal that students from this population has a lower graduation rate than that of most API groups as indicated in the census data and may require additional support. Without awareness of this information Hmong American students as well as other groups of similar sizes will be misrepresented where their needs will go unaddressed. Therefore, it is critical that higher education administrators use data that has been disaggregated and is context specific to their institution, to gain more insight into the needs of their students.

The second recommendation is about supporting Hmong American students, and other students from historically marginalized and underrepresented communities in their classes. Though there are several factors that can shape the classroom environment, faculty are often the ones who can largely define that space for students. With this, there are several things that faculty can do to make the space more welcoming for students from different backgrounds. First, faculty members need to meet with their students individually at least two to three times throughout the course. The purpose of these meetings is to establish trust, gain insight about students and their needs by asking them directly, and to actively work on creating connection between students and the course content. This is important as indicated by Cress and Ikeda (2003), who revealed that students with low levels of involvement, social activities, and interactions with peers and instructors were associated with depression. Therefore, by increasing things like interactions with peers and instructors, Hmong American students' experiences can improve, where they will feel more included, valued, and connected to their peers, the course content, and to the professor should these meetings occur regularly. Whereas, a class without these meetings will allow feelings of disconnect to persist where Hmong American students may feel the sense of meaninglessness and/or depression (Cress & Ikeda, 2003).

Secondly, faculty need to include in-class activities that invite students to work together to identify ways in which the course contents are related to their identities. An example of an inclusive activity is the use of the Matrix of Domination (Collins, 1990) to talk about privilege and identity in addition to a follow-up discussion and/or reflection paper on how the identity variables in ones' life are associated with privilege. Through this activity, students will gain a deeper understanding of who they are, as well as how they are connected to this topic. Activities

like this one can help encourage participation and the sharing of unique experiences, and strengthen a students' connection to their peers, professors, and overall class.

Lastly, faculty need to work more closely with other faculty and professionals of color to identify ways to help students feel more welcomed in the classroom and connected to the course content. Faculty and other professionals of color can provide valuable insight from personal experiences to determine the most appropriate approaches to working with students of color. For example, a professor may not be aware that eye-contact can be uncomfortable for some Asian students and may give them poor grades during presentations. The professor may think that they are being fair without considering the cultural implications and meaning of eye-contact. Through communication and working with other professionals of color, this professor would realize that eye-contact can be interpreted as offensive and disrespectful for these students and would not penalize them.

As indicated from the second recommendation, there are several things that faculty can do to improve the classroom environment for Hmong American students, as well as other students from historically marginalized and underrepresented populations. Faculty often have an adequate amount of discretion and power to shape the environment where they can decide the assignments, in-class activities, required texts, and having guest speakers among other things. With these opportunities, faculty need to begin to seriously consider the options provided under this recommendation or continue exploring options of their own to help create their classrooms into warm and welcoming environments.

The third and final recommendation for addressing racial microaggressions and institutional racism is the continuation of out-of-class support. In contrast to the previous recommendation for faculty members with in-class support, this area mostly pertains to higher

education professionals who provide students with programs, activities, and services beyond the classroom environment. Although counseling and student affairs professionals continue to provide students with a variety of services to support and engage them while on campus, there is more that can be done to strengthen and diversify these efforts. The following points for this recommendation will include work study experiences, funding for student organizations, and meeting students where they are at.

First, with work-study and the employment of student workers, efforts around these opportunities for students of color and those from other marginalized backgrounds need to also focus on implementing a culturally sensitive approach to supervision. In addition to job responsibilities, some effort should be focused on ensuring that student workers from these backgrounds are treated fairly, feel welcomed, and are included in team activities and conversations. Supervisors need to be supportive, remember the names of their employees, and avoid generalizations that may further marginalize them. Lastly, supervisors also need to avoid invalidating the students' concerns and/or experiences. The two last suggestions are examples of the two types of racial microaggressions that participants in this study experienced the most.

Secondly, higher education professionals need to work directly and more closely with Hmong American student organizations to provide guidance and support, specifically to ensure that professionals have some presence with Hmong students at the locations where they feel safe, and to help with the formal processes that are required for their organizations to receive funding. Student organizations are an essential component to the out-of-class experiences on campus where they provide an immeasurable amount of support, especially for student populations of color. As noted earlier in this chapter, Hmong American students are likely to be able to overcome environmental microaggressions and social estrangement because of these

student organizations. The organizations provide them with a physical location, resources, familiar faces, and a cultural boundary that they can move in and out of when on campus. Without the existence of these organizations, it is likely that they would also be affected by environmental microaggressions and feelings of social estrangement. With this perspective to consider, it is also important to note that the continuation of funding for their organizations may be important but is not always sought after by students. Therefore, counseling and student affairs professionals need to continue supporting students with guidance in these processes to help them sustain organizations and other student led efforts that help with their retention.

Lastly, higher education professionals need to meet students where they are at physically, culturally, and psychologically. Professionals in higher education often have specific locations where they wait for students to come to them at counseling centers, multicultural centers, tutoring centers, and conflict resolution centers for support. However, students have varying interest and comfort in traveling to these spaces for support. At times, a student may already be struggling to be present on a campus and the additional effort required to find these locations and physically go there may not be something that they want to do. Therefore, professionals across these units should have established relationships with these students and have a liaison that is frequently accessible for these students. In addition to building trust, liaisons can also be useful in providing information to students who may otherwise be not connected to their offices in any way. A good example of this would be a mental health counselor who spends time out of their offices to attend the events and activities that are led by the Hmong American student organizations. This individual could also reach out to the board members of these organizations to collaborate on projects such as establishing a mental health support group specifically for Hmong American students, or to be present at certain events that may require a mental health

professional. For most purposes, the presence of these professionals may be incredibly impactful for the experiences of these students.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides important insights into the racial experiences of Hmong American students, there are several limitations that should be considered. Among these limitations, the first is the lack of generalizability of the findings of this study. It is important to point out that this study was only conducted at two higher education institutions within the Midwest region of the United States. This is a critical factor because of the potential differences that exists across institutions. This study does not include Hmong American students who are in private and religious institutions, community and technical colleges, nor institutions with smaller student populations. Different institutions may have programs and services with varying degree of support for students of color and those from historically underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds. The Hmong American student population may vary as well across different institutions. These factors could produce different amounts and types of racial experiences for Hmong and other students of color.

Furthermore, the sample was also only limited to students who were active in student organizations which represented a small portion of the overall Hmong American student population at each institution. Hmong American students who were not directly involved in student organizations did not have a voice in this study. Therefore, the findings of this study only reflected the experiences of those who were engaged with these student organizations and were connected to the support system that the Hmong American students have established on these campuses.

Another limitation of this study was the use of self-reported data. Self-reported data can become a problem as it may not reflect the reality of the experiences of respondents. Distorted responses, whether unintentionally or intentionally, or overstating positively or negatively, can affect the validity of the inferences that researchers make based on findings (Dalal, 2012). In addition, Dalal (2012) also indicated that response bias becomes more of an issue as the level of sensitivity increases in order to avoid psychological costs to participants for whom being perceived as positive becomes more important than being honest. In this case, due to the sensitivity of the topic of this study, the information about racial experiences may have varying levels of accuracy based on its level of sensitivity the students who participated this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study has revealed important information about Hmong American students' experiences with racial microaggressions and alienation in the higher education setting, there is room for further exploration in this area. There are three main recommendations that will be made in this section for further research. These recommendations include considering (a) other types of institutions for a similar study; (b) other variables to examine; and (c) conducting a mixed method study that utilizes both quantitative analysis and a qualitative approach to inquiry. Each of these recommendations will be described in the following paragraphs.

Beginning with the first recommendation for future research, it is important to consider exploring the areas of Hmong American students' experiences with racial microaggressions and alienation in different types of institutions. Among the different types of higher education institutions, researchers should consider looking specifically at private and religious institutions and/or community and technical college because of the major differences in size, cost, and focus of each type along with additional institutions that are similar to the ones in this study to obtain a

larger sample. Private and religious institutions are typically more costly than community and technical colleges, as well as public institutions. This may impact the number of Hmong American students attending these institutions, which may then influence the availability of resources for students from this population at these institutions. With smaller Hmong American student communities on these campuses and a varying level of support for them, their racial experiences may differ from the participants of this study.

In contrast to private and religious institutions, community and technical colleges are typically less expensive and easier to access, which might influence a greater number of Hmong American students to attend these institutions since affordability may be an important factor in the process of decision making for Hmong American students and their families considering that over half of the participants in this study, 51% (*n = 49*) reported their household income to be between $31,402 – $41, 868. Therefore, it is logical to expect Hmong American student populations in community and technical colleges to be disproportionately larger than those in private and religious institutions. However, even with a larger student population, Hmong American students may not be able to effectively establish supportive communities within community and technical colleges due to the nature of these institutions where students who typically attend these institutions have a focus of transitioning to other institutions, which might not provide them with enough time and/or interest in establishing support systems such as those that exist in four-year institutions. Therefore, it is probable that Hmong American students in community and technical colleges have different experiences with racial microaggressions and alienation than those in this study.

Throughout the process of this study, there were noticeably several variables that were not considered in this study that were potentially associated with experiences with racial

microaggressions and alienation. Some of these variables include level of involvement with student organizations, cultural congruence, and identity development. Each of these variables were potentially be associated with ones' level of understanding of their racial identity, perception of racial experiences, and overall understanding of racism. For example, a Hmong American student who is not comfortable with their racial and/or ethnic identity may choose to ignore racially charged messages by peers' and may pretend that they did not experience racism. This individual might indicate in in the surveys used in this study that they have not experienced racism of any type and associate these experiences to other things. The opposite occurrence is possible as well, where one is overly sensitive to the subject of racism and may readily associate any of their experiences with racism. Therefore, it may be worth value to pursue any investigation that considers these variables and others to learn more about the nature of their relationship with the subject of racial microaggressions and/or alienation.

A final recommendation that should be considered in future studies is the use of a mixed method approach. Though this study has produced valuable information about certain aspects of the racial experiences of Hmong American students in higher education, the details of these experiences are unknown. A mixed method approach can potentially enhance and strengthen the findings in this study by including specific details about specific events regarding specific types of racial microaggressions and dimensions of alienation. Furthermore, qualitative data can assist in supporting some of the statistical findings in the study. The combined use of quantitative and qualitative in future studies would help strengthen any significant findings by demonstrating consistency between the two sets of data.

Conclusion

As the first study to examine the relationship between racial microaggression and alienation for Hmong American college students, this study makes a vital contribution to the current body of literature in the field of student affairs and higher education. The finding that five of the six types of racial microaggressions, namely *Micro-Invalidations, Assumptions of Inferiority, Workplace and School Microaggressions, Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality*, and *Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity,* were significantly associated with two dimensions of alienation, *Powerlessness* and *Meaninglessness* provide interesting insights into how racial microaggressions likely impact the higher education experience of Hmong American college students. As the only study to examine the relationship between racial microaggressions and alienation among Hmong American students in higher education, it provides a unique portrait of their racial experiences and this new information can be utilized for enhancing the success, especially the retention and graduation of Hmong American College students

It also offers new perspectives into how (a) Hmong American college students' experiences with racial microaggressions and alienation reflect some of the broader racial issues that APIs face as a whole and how (b) authorities in higher education institutions and in society overall, have largely remain ignorant of racial issues pertaining to this group. As indicated by this study, the existing body of literature, and recent news regarding issues of racism and alienation for Hmong American and API college students, these issues continue to impact students from these populations without meaningful responses.

Therefore, it is with hope and urgency, that authorities within higher education institutions across the United States will heed the call from this study and begin (a)

acknowledging that these issues exist and that they need to be adequately addressed; (b) paying equal attention and efforts to the concerns of Hmong students and other student populations of color who have had the privilege of being studied; and (c) developing meaningful responses to addressing these issues as they continue to persist and impact the daily experiences of these students. These are the changes that are necessary to improve the current conditions for Hmong students and provide them with an equal and equitable experience in higher education.

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Table 1

Item-Total Statistics: Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Assumptions of Inferiority	13.58	43.01	.75	.63	.68
Scale Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality	14.55	52.81	.63	.48	.73
Micro-Invalidations	13.31	42.78	.63	.52	.72
Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity	11.26	40.92	.67	.50	.71
Environmental Microaggressions	11.77	69.51	-.11	.07	.86
Workplace and School Microaggressions	14.47	51.95	.72	.61	.62

Table 2

Item-Total Statistics: University Alienation Scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Meaninglessness	49.00	60.19	.70	.51	.46
Powerlessness	46.64	60.28	.63	.47	.56
Social Estrangement	53.38	104.21	.40	.18	.81

Table 3

Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale Descriptives

			Statistic
REMS Total Score.	Mean		17.03
	Std. Error of Mean		.94
	Median		16.02
	Std. Deviation		9.25
	Variance		85.49
	Skewness		.47
	Std. Error of Skewness		.25
	Kurtosis		-.611
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.49
	Range		36.02
	Minimum		3.00
	Maximum		39.02
	Percentiles	25	9.01
		50	16.02
		75	23.52

Table 4

University Alienation Scale Descriptives

			Statistic
UAS Total Score.	Mean		74.52
	Std. Error of Mean		1.24
	Median		74.00
	Std. Deviation		12.20
	Variance		148.80
	Skewness		-.27
	Std. Error of Skewness		.25
	Kurtosis		-.17
	Std. Error of Kurtosis		.49
	Range		64
	Minimum		3.00
	Maximum		103.00
	Percentiles	25	66.00
		50	74.00
		75	84.00

Table 5

Test of Homogeneity of Variances: Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

	Based on Mean	Based on Median	Based on Median and with adjusted df	Based on trimmed mean
Levene Statistic	.70	.56	.56	.63
df1	1	1	1	1
df2	95	95	94.32	95
Sig.	.41	.46	.46	.43

Table 6

Test of Homogeneity of Variances: University Alienation Scale

	Based on Mean	Based on Median	Based on Median and with adjusted df	Based on trimmed mean
Levene Statistic	1.68	1.61	1.61	1.62
df1	1	1	1	1
df2	95	95	94.71	95
Sig.	.20	.21	.21	.21

Table 7

Test of Normality: University Alienation Scale

		Meaninglessness	Powerlessness	Social Estrangement
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Statistic	.09	.07	.08
	df	97	97	97
	Sig.	.06	.20	.09
Shapiro-Wilk	Statistic	.98	.99	.99
	df	97	97	97
	Sig.	.29	.58	.56

Note . a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
* This is a lower bound of the true significance

Table 8

Correlations: Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale and University Alienation Scale

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Assumptions of Inferiority	Pearson Correlation	1	.60	.60	.62	-.05	.73	.32	.32	.03
	Sig (2-tailed)		.00	.00	.00	.60	.00	.00	.00	.78
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
2. Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality	Pearson Correlation	.60	1	.51	.45	-.03	.65	.24	.25	.16
	Sig (2-tailed)	.00		.00	.00	.77	.00	.02	.02	.11
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
3. Micro-Invalidations	Pearson Correlation	.56	.51	1	.63	-.21	.55	.34	.37	.05
	Sig (2-tailed)	.00	.00		.00	.04	.00	.00	.00	.65
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
4. Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity	Pearson Correlation	.62	.45	.63	1	-.04	.53	.33	.32	-.03
	Sig (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00		.67	.00	.00	.00	.74
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
5. Environmental Microaggressions	Pearson Correlation	-.05	-.03	-.21	-.04	1	-.07	-.01	.05	.16
	Sig (2-tailed)	.60	.77	.04	.67		.51	.92	.65	.11
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
6. Workplace and School Microaggressions	Pearson Correlation	.73	.65	.55	.53	-.07	1	.36	.33	.08
	Sig (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.51		.00	.00	.45
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
7.Meaninglessness	Pearson Correlation	.32	.24	.34	.33	-.01	.36	1	.68	.42
	Sig (2-tailed)	.00	.02	.00	.00	.92	.00		.00	.00
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
8. Powerlessness	Pearson Correlation	.32	.25	.37	.32	.05	.33	68	1	32
	Sig (2-tailed)	.00	.02	.00	.00	.65	.00	.00		.00
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97
9. Social Estrangement	Pearson Correlation	.03	.16	.05	-.03	.16	.08	.42	.32	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.78	.11	.65	.74	.11	.45	.00	.00	1
	N	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97

Table 9

Multivariate Tests: Racial Microaggressions, University Alienation, and Gender

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.97	1713.50	2.00	94.00	.00	.97	3426.99	1.00
	Wilks' Lambda	.03	1713.50	2.00	94.00	.00	.97	3426.99	1.00
	Hotelling's Trace	36.46	1713.50	2.00	94.00	.00	.97	3426.99	1.00
	Roy's Largest Root	36.46	1713.50	2.00	94.00	.00	.97	3426.99	1.00
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.02	.87	2.00	94.00	.42	.02	1.73	.20
	Wilks' Lambda	.98	.87	2.00	94.00	.42	.02	1.73	.20
	Hotelling's Trace	.02	.87	2.00	94.00	.42	.02	1.73	.20
	Roy's Largest Root	.02	.87	2.00	94.00	.42	.02	1.73	.20

Note. a. Design: Intercept + Gender
b. Exact statistic
c. Computed using alpha = .05

Appendix A: Participant Consent Form

Racial Microaggressions and Alienation Among Hmong American College Students

Consent Form

Principal Investigator Jacqueline Lewis, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Program Coordinator, College Student Affairs Program
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Department of Counseling and Student Personnel
107 Armstrong Hall
Mankato, MN 56001
Phone: 507 389-5657

Additional Investigators Bruce Yang, Doctoral Student
Department of Counseling and Student Personnel
Minnesota State University, Mankato
107 Armstrong Hall, Mankato, MN 56001
Phone: 612-426-0990; email: bruce.yang@mnsu.edu

You are invited to participate in a research study (ETHOS STUDY00004567) at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. The purpose of this study is to examine the (a) association between racial microaggressions and university alienation among Hmong American students in higher education; and (b) possible differences between males and females of this group in relation to this association. You are being asked to take part of this study because the information that you provide can potentially increase awareness around the experiences of Hmong American students in predominantly White higher education institutions (PWI's) regarding these two variables, which may inform professionals in the field how to better support students from this population.

The study will be conducted by the principal investigator, Dr. Jacqueline Lewis and doctoral student, Bruce Yang from the department of Counseling and Student Personnel (CSP) at Minnesota State University, Mankato, as part of the requirements of the doctoral of education degree in the department of Counseling and Student Personnel at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Participants of this study will be asked to either complete the consent form and surveys through email or, to attend a data collection session to complete the following the (a) consent form, to provide participants with an overview of the study and inform them of their rights; (b) demographic information sheet, (c) Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS) which measures racial microaggressions experienced by participants; and the (d) University Alienation Scale (UAS), which measures alienation experienced by participants. Participants will have 90 minutes to complete the surveys and will be allowed to ask questions within and around the time frame of data collection.

To protect participant's confidentiality and anonymity, participants will not be asked to include any identifying information such as their names and only people that will have access to this data are the principal investigator and additional investigator. All the information will be kept confidential and kept in a secured location at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Upon completion of this project, all data will be stored in a secure location and eventually destroyed.

The risks of being involved in this study are associated with ones' recalling of their racial experiences. If you feel in need counseling, contact Student Counseling Services at 612-624-3323 and/or visit them in Appleby Hall 340. There is no cost to students registered at the University of Minnesota,

Twin Cities if they seek help from the Student Counseling Services. Thank you for your cooperation in this project. Possible benefits may include (a) increased awareness of experiences of the sample population in predominantly White institutions; (b) enhancement in best practices for this and/or other historically underrepresent and marginalized populations in higher education; and (c) having greater sensitivity when working with Hmong American students.

Participant's Agreement:

I am aware that my participation in this study is voluntary. I understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to discontinue my participation in the study, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

The researcher has reviewed the individual and social benefits and risks of this project with me. I am aware the data will be used in a dissertation that will be published and publicly available at Minnesota State University, Mankato in Memorial Library. I have the right to review, comment on, and/or withdraw information prior to the dissertation's submission. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to my personal identity unless I specify otherwise.

If I have any questions about this study, I am free to contact the principal investigator, Jacqueline Lewis by phone at 507-389-5655 and through email at jacqueline.lewis@mnsu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the research participants' Advocate Line, (612) 625-1650 or go to http://research.umn.edu/units/hrpp/research-participants/questions-concerns.

I have read the above form and give my consent to participate in this study.

ETHOS STUDY00004567

_____ _____

Participant's Name (Print) Date

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

Appendix B: Demographic Information Sheet

Please **check or circle** the most appropriate response.

1. **Gender:** _____

2. **Age** (specify):_____

3. **Race/Ethnicity**: _____

4. **Year in School: (circle appropriate response)**

Freshmen Sophomore Junior Senior Other

5. **Student Status: (circle appropriate response)**

Full-time Student Part-time Student

6. **Mother's Level of Education (circle appropriate response)**

High School Degree Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctoral Degree

7. **Father's Level of Education (circle appropriate response)**

High School Degree Associate's Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctoral Degree

8. **Household Income (circle appropriate response)**

$31,402 to $41,868 $41,869 to $125,608 $125,609 to $188,412 $188,412 and above.

Appendix C: Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS)

Instructions: Think about your experiences with race. Please read each item and think of how many times this event has happened to you in the **PAST SIX MONTHS**.

0 = I did not experience this event
1 = I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

1. I was ignored at school or at work because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

2. Someone's body language showed they were scared of me, because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

3. Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

4. I was told that I should not complain about race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

5. Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

6. Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

7. Someone told me that she or he was colorblind.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

8. Someone avoided sitting next to me in a public space (e.g., restaurants, movie theaters, subways, buses) because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

9. Someone assumed that I would not be intelligent because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

10. I was told that I complain about race too much.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

11. I received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other racial groups.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

12. I observed people of my race in prominent positions at my workplace or school.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

13. Someone wanted to date me only because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

14. I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

15. My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

16. Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

17. Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

18. I observed that people of my race were the CEOs of major corporations.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

19. I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

20. Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the US.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

21. Someone assumed that I would not be educated because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

22. Someone told me that I was “articulate” after she/he assumed I wouldn’t be.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

23. Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

24. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

25. An employer or co-worker was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

26. I was told that people of color do not experience racism anymore.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

27. Someone told me that they “don’t see color.”

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

28. I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people from my racial group.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

29. Someone asked me to teach them words in my “native language.”

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

30. Someone told me that they do not see race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

31. Someone clenched her/his purse or wallet upon seeing me because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

32. Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

33. Someone of a different racial group has stated that there is no difference between the two of us.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

34. Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

35. Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

36. Someone assumed that I held a lower paying job because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

37. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

38. Someone assumed that I was poor because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

39. Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

40. Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

41. I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

42. Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

43. Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

44. An employer or co-worker treated me differently than White co-workers.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

45. Someone assumed that I speak similar languages to other people in my race.

0	1
I did not experience this event	I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

Appendix D: University Alienation Scale (UAS)

Below are some statements regarding university issues with which you may agree or disagree. Please register your feelings regarding these statements, i.e., whether you agree or disagree with the statements as they stand. Please complete every item.

Please check in the appropriate blank as follows:

_____SA (STRONGLY AGREE)

_____A (AGREE)

_____U (UNCERTAIN)

_____D (DISAGREE

_____SD (STRONGLY DISAGREE)

1. The size and complexity of this university make it very difficult for a student to know where to turn.
   _____ SA (5)
   _____ A (4)
   _____ U (3)
   _____ D (2)
   _____ SD (1)

(P) 2. It is only wishful thinking to believe that a student can really influence what happens at this university.
   _____ SA (5)
   _____ A (4)
   _____ U (3)
   _____ D (2)
   _____ SD (1)

(P) 3. Classes at this university are so regimented that there is little room for the personal needs and interests of the student.
   _____ SA (5)
   _____ A (4)
   _____ U (3)
   _____ D (2)
   _____ SD (1)

(P) 4. The faculty has too much control over the lives of students at this university.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(M) 5. The bureaucracy of this university has me confused and bewildered.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(S) 6. I feel that I am an integral part of this university community.
_____ SA (1)
_____ A (2)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (4)
_____ SD (5)

(M) 7. Things have become so complicated at this university that I really don't understand just what is going on.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(S) 8. I seldom feel lost or alone at this university.
_____ SA (1)
_____ A (2)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (4)
_____ SD (5)

(P) 9. Students are just so many cogs in the machinery at this university.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(S) 10. I don't have as many friends as I would like at this university.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(P) 11. Most of the time I feel I have an effective voice in the decisions regarding my life at this university.
_____ SA (1)
_____ A (2)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (4)
_____ SD (5)

(M) 12. Life within the social system of this university is so chaotic that the student really doesn't know where to turn.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(S) 13. Many students at this university are lonely and unrelated to their fellow human beings.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(P) 14. More and more, I feel helpless in the face of what is happening at this university today.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(M) 15. There are forces affecting me at this university that are so complex and confusing that I find it difficult to effectively make decisions.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)

_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(M) l6. I can't seem to make much sense out of my university experience.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(S) 17. My experience at this university has been devoid of any meaningful relationships.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(P) 18. The administration has too much control over my life at this university.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(P) 19. This university is run by a few people in power and there is not much the student can do about it.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(P) 20. The student has little chance of protecting his/her personal interests when they conflict with those of this university.
_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(S) 21. In spite of the fast pace of this university, it is easy to make many close friends that you can really count on.
_____ SA (1)
_____ A (2)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (4)

_____ SD (5)

(M) 22. My life is so confusing at this university that I hardly know what to expect from day to day.

_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(M) 23. In this fast-changing university, with so much conflicting information available, it is difficult to think clearly about many issues.

_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

(S) 24. This university is just too big and impersonal to provide for the individual student.

_____ SA (5)
_____ A (4)
_____ U (3)
_____ D (2)
_____ SD (1)

Appendix E: IRB Approval Minnesota State University, Mankato

July 9, 2018

Dear Jacqueline Lewis, PhD:

Re: IRB Proposal entitled "[1280100-4] Racial Microaggressions and Alienation Among Hmong American College Students"
Review Level: Level *[I, II, III]*

Your IRB Proposal has been approved as of July 9, 2018. On behalf of the Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB, we wish you success with your study. Remember that you must seek approval for any changes in your study, its design, funding source, consent process, or any part of the study that may affect participants in the study (see https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/revision.html). Should any of the participants in your study suffer a research-related injury or other harmful outcome, you are required to report them to the Associate Vice-President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies immediately.

When you complete your data collection or should you discontinue your study, you must submit a Closure request (see https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/closure.html). All documents related to this research must be stored for a minimum of three years following the date on your Closure request. Please include your IRBNet ID number with any correspondence with the IRB.

The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for maintaining signed consent forms in a secure location at MSU for 3 years following the submission of a Closure request. If the PI leaves MSU before the end of the 3-year timeline, he/she is responsible for following "Consent Form Maintenance" procedures posted online (see http://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/storingconsentforms.pdf).

Sincerely,

Mary Hadley, Ph.D.
IRB Coordinator

Jeffrey Buchanan, PhD
IRB Co-Chair

Julie Carlson, Ed.D.
IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB's records.

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Appendix F: IRB Approval University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Human Research Protection Program
Office of the Vice President for Research

D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 820
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: 612-626-5654
Fax: 612-626-6061
Email: irb@umn.edu
http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects/

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

November 8, 2018

Bruce Yang

612-625-5503
yang0609@umn.edu

Dear Bruce Yang:

On 11/8/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Racial Microaggressions and Alienation Among Hmong Students in Higher Education
Investigator:	Bruce Yang
IRB ID:	STUDY00004567
Sponsored Funding:	None
Grant ID/Con Number:	None
Internal UMN Funding:	None
Fund Management Outside University:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed with this Submission:	• Consent Form - IRB.docx, Category: Consent Form; • Study Invitation Email.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials; • SOCIAL PROTOCOL (HRP-580) (1).docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Letter of Support from Advisor.pdf, Category: Other; • DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET.docx, Category: Other; • Approval Documentation from Dr. Frances Lawrenz, Category: Other; • Letter of Support from Chair of Department.pdf, Category: Other;

	• UNIVERSITY ALIENATION SCALE.docx, Category: Other; • Approval Letter from MNSU.pdf, Category: Approvals from Other IRBs / Ethics Committees; • RACIAL AND ETHNIC MICROAGGRESSIONS SCALE.docx, Category: Other;

The IRB determined that this study meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To arrive at this determination, the IRB used "WORKSHEET: Exemption (HRP-312)." If you have any questions about this determination, please review that Worksheet in the HRPP Toolkit Library and contact the IRB office if needed.

This study met the following category for exemption:

• (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that Human Subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the Human Subjects responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability, or reputation

Ongoing IRB review and approval for this study is not required; however, this determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a Modification to the IRB for a determination.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the HRPP Toolkit Library on the IRB website.

For grant certification purposes, you will need these dates and the Assurance of Compliance number which is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003).

Sincerely,

Bri Warner
IRB Analyst

We value feedback from the research community and would like to hear about your experience. The link below will take you to a brief survey that will take a minute or two to complete. The questions are basic, but your responses will help us better understand what we are doing well and areas that may require improvement. Thank you in advance for completing the survey.

Even if you have provided feedback in the past, we want and welcome your evaluation.

http://z.umn.edu/irbsurvey